

A
172
W3

HUMAN ANGER:
" "
A BIBLICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
Michael I. Walsh
June 1972

PERMISSION TO COPY
MUSIC
FROM

This dissertation, written by

Michael I. Walsh

*under the direction of—His Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF RELIGION

Faculty Committee

Frank H. Limper

How. D. Lee B.R.

Date

June 1972

F. Thomas Trotter

Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ANGER: A PROBLEM WITH A HISTORY	1
A. Wrath in Antiquity	4
B. Wrath in the Old Testament	6
1. Human wrath in the Old Testament	7
2. Wrath of God in the Old Testament	9
3. Summary	17
II. JESUS' EXPRESSION OF WRATH AND THE PROBLEM OF THE INCARNATION	19
A. Wrath of God in the New Testament	19
B. Wrath Portrayed in Jesus' Life	24
1. Tension between the humanity and divinity of Jesus	26
2. Conflict with Hellenism	28
3. Christological formulations	30
4. Jesus: eschatological judge	32
C. The Parables of the New Testament	35
1. Jesus' parables as language event	35
2. The function of anger in the parables	38
a. The Great Banquet	38
b. The Unmerciful Servant	44
3. The eschatological wrath of God	48

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. THE NEW TESTAMENT'S EXPLICIT CONCERN ABOUT	
HUMAN ANGER	52
A. The Distinctions in the Words for	
Human Wrath	52
B. The Dilemma of the New Testament	
Writers	53
C. Human Anger in the Sermon on the Mount	55
D. Human Anger in the Epistles	60
E. Summary of the First Three Chapters	65
IV. ANGER IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY	68
A. The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis	69
B. Anger--An Intervening Variable	72
C. Situation Cues for Anger	74
D. Berkowitz and The Instigation to Aggression	76
E. Buss: Physiological Components of Anger	80
F. Catharsis and Hostility	91
G. Anger: A Signal	93
V. CONCLUSIONS	97
A. Biblical Aggression, Not Anger	97
B. The Devil, Not Catharsis	98
C. Implicit Anger in the New Testament	99

CHAPTER	PAGE
D. Perfectionism Disrupts Human Relations	102
E. Christological Implications for the Church	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107

CHAPTER I

ANGER: A PROBLEM WITH A HISTORY

Anger is an experience shared by everybody, yet very few people claim to understand it. The label, "anger," applies to such a range of phenomena that a definition eludes precision. This fact alone has contributed to the paucity of scholarly work dealing systematically with anger. It seems to be everyone's experience, yet no man's subject.

The general cultural approach to anger, that of suppression, also contributes to the lack of consideration given this subject. The church has itself contributed to the suppression which has kept anger outside the arena of open discussion and examination. Other social institutions have further augmented the avoidance of anger, whether anger has been manifested individually or corporately. When anger has been recognized and faced, it has usually been in a problematic situation and on a privatized basis, which serves further to restrict public consideration of it. Consequently, the persons directly involved are left isolated and alone, dealing with experiences that without adequate understanding are frequently detrimental to human relationships. Disruption, separation, immobilization, and pain are therefore the consequences associated with anger, which in turn solidify the suppressive attitude taken when anger is expressed. The emerging cycle is evident; as well, the negative consequences are

readily available for confirmation by most people.

The contemporary scene in which anger and aggression find expression in international politics, national life, and in private matters supplies a general background which motivated me to study anger. Yet as much as any other one factor, it has been the personal struggle of coming to grips with and understanding my own personal anger which led me to this whole investigation. Like others, my previous experience also has informed me that anger is to be avoided, not admitted, and that it inevitably leads to negative consequences. This perspective, it seems, has guaranteed negative consequences. Possibly given a new and different perspective, other consequences, not necessarily negative, might emerge.

It is with this open-ended, questing attitude, tempered by a hope that I, as well as other people, can reaffirm more of our total experience as worthwhile, that I set out on this inquiry. At the onset I admit to have these hopes, which endanger an unbiased approach to the texts and the research by threatening to impose an interpretation more to my liking than the one expressed by the original author or authors. My responsibility needs to be that of letting the literature first speak for itself, before I add my own understandings.

Our biblical tradition is filled with expressions of anger or wrath by both God and men. I will use these terms interchangeably in this paper, unless specific comparisons between wrath and anger are being made. I am interested to discover what evaluations have been placed on these expressions of anger, especially the expressions of

human anger in the New Testament. Hopefully, some helpful insights will emerge from such an investigation.

I will then compare these New Testament conceptualizations of anger with contemporary ones. The paper will not be inclusive of the wide range of contemporary expressions of anger listed above, nor will it develop a systematic approach to group conflict resolution or individual therapy. These efforts are beyond the scope of this paper. I merely wish to compare one understanding and evaluation of anger, the New Testament biblical one, to another more contemporary understanding and evaluation of the same subject. From these comparisons should come some conclusions which I hope will provide some implications for dealing with anger; and also, I would hope, open the area of anger for more forthright and constructive consideration, especially in the church.

I will proceed by first summarizing the article by Kleinknecht on Wrath in Kittel's *Bible Key Words*.¹ For the most part I will follow the outline he uses in tracing the tradition behind wrath, but at points where I want to expand or critique Kleinknecht, I will draw in additional materials. Chapter one deals with wrath in antiquity and in the Old Testament. Chapter two explores wrath as it was portrayed in Jesus' life and in two of the parables. Chapter three explores human wrath as it was evaluated in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Epistles.

¹Hermann Kleinknecht, J. Fichtner, and G. Stählin, "Wrath," in *Bible Key Words* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), IV.

Chapter four takes an historical approach to the development in the contemporary understanding of anger beginning in 1939.

Chapter five is a short section which draws conclusions from the biblical and psychological areas, and explores some of the theological implications of human wrath.

A. WRATH IN ANTIQUITY

ὄργη bears a close resemblance to ὀργάω/ὀργάς, the words which for the post-Homeric poets and writers of prose referred to the "luxuriant rising of sap and energy, the impelling and germinating activity of nature."² ὄργη itself referred to the impulsive behavior of man and beasts, especially that impulsive state of the human spirit which breaks out actively in external behavior, quite in contrast to the more quiet and internal ἥθος (customs and habits). The Greeks viewed both processes, the rising of sap in nature and the impulsive expression of human spirit in man, as necessary and natural, putting no further evaluation on either of them.

Later when ὄργη was related to Greek tragedy, it meant the reaction of the human soul which wrathfully and violently directed itself towards external objects with the intent of vengeance and/or punishment. This force, an expression of the human soul, sought to preserve that which was recognized as right, and later became the legitimate attitude of judges whose job it was to avenge wrongdoing.

²*Ibid.*, IV, 1.

From here ὀργή assumed the meaning of punishment. Thus far the function of ὀργή was either natural to human life or a legitimized element of human life.

ὀργή began to assume a negative evaluation as it became associated with the blind passions which drove men to destruction in the Greek tragedies. This conception of ὀργή was antithetical to the Greek notions of orderly λόγος or guidance by σοφία. ὀργή was itself evil, accompanied by additional evils. At this stage, ethical-philosophical claims demanded that man should be the master of his emotional disturbances. However, the Greeks had no clear-cut philosophical position regarding human expression of anger.

While Academics and Peripatetics explain anger as natural, indeed as necessary for great deeds and virtues, above all for warlike bravery, and only aim at moderating and guiding anger by reason, in the opinion of the Stoics ὀργή and its like is one of the chief passions to be stamped out as far as possible.³

Out of the philosophical tradition emerged the negative valuation of human anger. The traditions of popular Greek mythology contributed to this development.

Pre-Homeric religions expressed the anger of the gods with the words χόλος, κότος and especially μῆνις.⁴ All of these words meant anger; however, they were confined to the sphere of sacred expression of anger. The Furies offered a good example. Anger was their essence and they retaliated in anger when the bounds of nature were violated. Since Homer, sacred anger has exercised a significant

³*Ibid.*, IV, 5.

⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 4.

force in the unfolding of fate. Whether it was directed against other gods or against men, divine anger legitimately expressed protest and self-assertion by the gods against the overstepping of inherent limits.

Here anger and wrath are not so much anthropomorphic traits of character, but rather something to which the god has kind of a right because his claim to existence has been slighted, . . . the anger of the gods is not blind in its rage but clear-sighted and, in regard to men, is in a negative manner the honour which they do him by indicating his nature or by confining him within the limits assigned to him in order that in them he may be what he is.⁵

Divine anger was first denoted in Greek tragedy with the word ὀργή, and since Euripides this word, which was previously confined to the expression of human anger, has conveyed also sacred anger. This presented problems. The divine wrath traditions which had developed out of the cults and mythologies collided diametrically with the emerging philosophical traditions. The word ὀργή attributed externally expressed anthropomorphic anger to the gods, who, under Stoic philosophic influence, were supposed to be perfect, i.e., free from the weakness of passions. The effort to purge the gods of this human contamination resulted in the negative valuation of human anger in contrast to the philosophical perfection of the gods.

B. WRATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Kleinknecht next takes up the theme of anger in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament ten words or word combinations mean

⁵*Ibid.*

wrath, anger, irritation, rage, etc.⁶ Of the approximate 455 nouns related to anger, only about 80 of them refer to human anger. The large majority refer to divine anger.⁷ The most frequently used Hebrew term (210 times) for wrath is 'ap which originally meant "to snort." From this word came the meaning of nose and nostrils, which in the Old Testament is not so much an organ of smell as it is an "organ of anger"⁸ . . . "because he (God) was angry, smoke went up from his nostrils" (Ps. 18:7f.).

1. Human Wrath in the Old Testament

Man's expression of wrath in the Old Testament is directed primarily at other men, rather than at God or at animals. The Old Testament justifies man's wrath or anger when it expresses a disinterested motive and is aroused not for the mere preservation of the angered individual's own rights. David's wrath, for example, is justifiably stirred against the rich man in Nathan's story who stole the poor fellow's only lamb (II Sam. 12:5). Secondly, the Old Testament justifies human anger when it is kindled in response to a defiance of Yahweh's sovereignty or a disrespect for his holiness. Moses becomes wrathful at the apostacy of the Israelites at Sinai (Ex. 32:19). The prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, express in their wrath the wrath of the Lord, e.g., Jer. 6:11. This second mode of human wrath, however, can hardly be considered purely human since it is so closely tied with violations of God's sovereignty or

⁶*Ibid.*, IV, 14-18.

⁷*Ibid.*, IV, 14-18, 22.

⁸*Ibid.*, IV, 14.

is in fact considered an indirect expression of God's wrath. This type of human anger, although expressed by men, seemed to be justified more because it represents God's anger.

The Old Testament seems to evaluate as selfish any human expression of anger by men who felt themselves to be injured in a real or seemingly justifiable way.⁹ Also, little distinction exists between wrath which implies a natural, impulsive outburst of violent emotion and wrath which harbors a sullen store of brooding ill-will (Gen. 44:18). This frequent ambiguity does not help establish a clear-cut evaluation regarding human anger.¹⁰

Finally, Old Testament men occasionally vent their anger directly at God when they perceive his actions as arbitrary, inconsistent, enigmatic, or incomprehensible (see I Sam. 15:11 and Job 10:2f.). In the final chapter of Job, God challenges Job's impudence, as had Job's friends earlier, making inappropriate, in this case anyway, any anger toward God, no matter how justifiable it might have seemed.

The wisdom literature alone in the Old Testament explicitly and consistently condemns human anger,¹¹ mainly because of its bad consequences. For this reason it is to be avoided and calmed down (Prov. 15:18). Throughout the Old Testament however, human anger is accepted as natural to the state of man, an emotion to be calmed and

⁹*Ibid.*, IV, 20.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, IV, 20 n#4.

¹¹*Ibid.*, IV, 21f.

restricted, but not eliminated. Hence the expression of human anger in the Old Testament generally receives a negative evaluation, primarily because of its destructive consequences.

2. The Wrath of God in the Old Testament

The majority of the time wrath in the Old Testament is God's wrath. Any combination of wrath terms refers exclusively to the wrath of God. By means of piling together the wrath terms, God's wrath is made all the more impressive and distinct from man's wrath. These compound combinations are usually tied with the name Yahweh, the God of the covenant. Kleinknecht therefore concludes the wrath of God was theologically connected to the faith of the covenant.¹² Kleinknecht notes that there is no mention of the wrath of God in pre-Sinai Genesis.¹³ The wrath of God appears only after the covenant with Israel was established. However, the later post-exilic priestly writers tried to weaken the connection between God and wrath,¹⁴ trying to establish a less anthropomorphic God and a more theological conceptualization of God.

Since divine wrath in the Old Testament is connected to the covenant relationship between the Hebrew people and their one God, Yahweh, the Hebrews knew when they experienced divine wrath that its source was Yahweh, not a multitude of demons or lesser gods like the Greeks had in their pantheon. In addition to knowing that wrath issued from a definite source, the Hebrews saw the divine wrath as

¹²*Ibid.*, IV, 24.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

personal and purposive, not as a function of fate randomly striking men when they unknowingly violated their natural limits. Yahweh's wrath for the most part had to be contended with just like the personal wrath of other people; the Hebrews interpreted it not only as judgment of human disobedience to God's covenant law, but they also saw it as an emotional disturbance of God who was upset in relation to his chosen people's disobedience. God's wrath had a past history connected to Israel's history and God's wrath could be anticipated in the future if disobedience continued. Despite the high degree of anthropomorphizing of Yahweh and his wrath, the Jews maintained the radical distance between God and his creation. This distance likewise applied between divine and human wrath. Human wrath "is rooted predominantly in the tyrannical ego of man."¹⁵

God's wrath struck collective peoples in the earlier Old Testament understanding of divine wrath. No individuals suffered God's wrath in Deuteronomy, the chronicles, or the Psalms, unless the individual represented the Hebrew people as a whole, e.g., Moses in Ex. 4:14. Also, collective groups suffered the consequences of the sins of individuals. Israel itself was the object of God's wrath, although the Hebrews often claimed a false security, feeling themselves to be chosen by God and above his wrath. Quite the contrary, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel especially pointed out, God's choosing of Israel as a special people made Israel particularly liable to Yahweh's wrath when

¹⁵*Ibid.*, IV, 26.

Israel violated the covenant, thereby demonstrating a lack of faith. The other nations and their rulers were also the objects of God's wrath, especially during and after the exile.

Whenever and wherever the wrath of Yahweh struck in the Old Testament, the very existence of the covenant people was at stake. The corollary: whenever men of the covenant felt the meaning of their collective existence, their existence itself, to be threatened, they interpreted this experience as the wrath of God.¹⁶ Again the idea of the divine wrath was closely connected with the covenant relationship and the Hebrews' sense of life-meaning emerging out of God's act of choosing and guiding them as a people. When this relationship was jeopardized, life-meaning and existence itself were threatened.

Kleinknecht enumerates the variety of metaphors used in the Old Testament to portray divine wrath. Fire is the most commonly used metaphor, e.g., Jer. 15:14, "My anger is a fire kindled which shall burn forever." The storm functions much like fire, but it occurs less frequently.

And the Lord will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones. (Is. 30:30)

In connection with the storm image, the metaphor of snorting occurs, connected to the original "snorting" meaning of *'αρ* (see above, p. 7). Lastly, images of liquid, "Pouring and emptying out," and the image of drinking convey divine wrath. "Pour out thy wrath upon the nations

¹⁶*Ibid.*, IV, 29.

that know thee not and upon the peoples that call not thy name" (Jer. 10:25). "Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty" (Job 21:20). Metaphors of fire, wine, and the cup of wine are occasionally variations on the liquid imagery.¹⁷

Although the Old Testament describes God's wrath in cosmic proportions involving all of creation with the effect of total annihilation, these catastrophes came about in history by way of historical forces and events. For Israel the effect of God's wrath impinged most powerfully upon the Hebrews by way of banishment from their land, the promise of land being one of the elements of the covenant made with Abram in Gen. 15. The exile, then, is the chief example of the wrath of God. Earlier traditions did include plagues, slaughter and abandonment to the enemies of Israel.¹⁸

Some distinctions exist between God's wrath expressed within history and the eschatological wrath to be anticipated at the end of history. The latter is known as the Day of Yahweh, the Day of the Lord, or the Day of Wrath (Is. 2:6-20). Eschatological wrath was originally interpreted as God's power to banish all the other nations. Eichrodt, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*, elaborates further that under the influence of the pre-exilic prophets, who interpreted all of man's existence as separation from and in defiance of God, eschatological wrath held sway as a dominant motif. All the world

¹⁷*Ibid.*, IV, 30f.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, IV, 33f.

stood under God's ultimate wrath, especially the unfaithful of Israel (not merely the "other nations" as earlier thought). God's wrath in this case was not a transitory thing, but a phenomenon to be contended with and endured until the end of history, which would itself be a consequence of God's wrath. Under such prophetic influences, apocalypticism and other worldly influences gained primary influence, with accompanying messianic expectations and feelings that the faithful would survive the Day of Wrath, while the majority would be condemned. These extremely apocalyptic views peaked during the exile and mellowed thereafter, accompanied by a reinstatement of a divine wrath of retributive justice connected more to this world than to an "other worldiness." However, this vacillation between an apocalyptic notion of wrath and a wrath dominated more by love did continue, based on the changing social situation.¹⁹ Clearly distinguishing between the prophecies of God's wrath anticipated in history or prophecies of wrath at the end of time is difficult.²⁰

The Old Testament reveals a developing understanding of God's motives for anger. Some Old Testament writers picture Yahweh's wrath as arbitrary and enigmatic (e.g., Jacob's wrestling with the angel--Gen. 32; or Yahweh's attempt on Moses' life--Ex. 4:24). Later interpretations unsuccessfully try to repudiate such notions of an irrational God by attributing such outbursts of incomprehensible anger

¹⁹Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), I, 268f.

²⁰Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 32.

to Satan (I Chron. 21:1). The separating out of anger from Yahweh establishes no satisfactory resolution however, as it tends to posit a demonology more Greek than Hebrew in character.

Alas, this demonic quality of the divine has to be accepted as bound up with the most inward nature of this Hebrew God. In the later as in the earlier period, men were actively aware of being exposed to the behavior of God which was so incomprehensible as to approximate to caprice and of which it may perhaps be more appropriate to say that the completely unfathomable, 'the entirely other' is encountered.
 . . .²¹

This point of view places much weight on the sheer power and holiness of God.

But the Old Testament picture of God's wrath is not totally incomprehensible. As Yahweh came to be seen as the granter of laws and the keeper of justice, divine wrath came to be interpreted as the consequences of human transgression. An awareness developed with the Jews that offenses against Yahweh's covenant precipitated his wrath. Men who disobeyed God's law in showing a lack of faith, that is, revolting against God's will and leadership, experienced divine wrath (Deut. 1:34f.). Kleinknecht notes the sequence: "apostacy of the people, this provokes Yahweh, wrath of Yahweh who sells Israel to foreign nations. . . ."²²

The prophets most graphically accused Israel and declared the reality of this sequence. They repeatedly made an underlying accusation, whether they focused on the symptoms of social injustice, cultic practice, war policies, political alliances, or the worship of foreign

²¹*Ibid.*, IV, 37.

²²*Ibid.*, IV, 39.

gods: "the nation has forgotten its God, has turned away from him and thereby despised his love (Amos 3:1 & 2; Hosea 11:1-6) . . . It is Yahweh's wounded and holy love which arouses his wrath."²³

Yahweh's love formed the basis for the covenant, and when the Jews violated it, they rejected God's love. Out of this context the Old Testament speaks of God's jealousy being kindled. In this sense jealousy connotes both a concern, especially after the exile, and the notion of personal upset.

God's wrath had cosmic proportions in that the Jews claimed universality for his law, the law of one God over all of creation. The whole world comes under his rule. Hence God called Jonah to announce to the Assyrian city of Nineveh the imminence of divine wrath unless the people repented. The universal character of human sin subjugates all of mankind to the wrath of God. Hybris, acting in all men to reject God's love, power, and holiness, precipitates divine wrath and its consequences. All humanity then, being caught in sin, is subject, as it were, to the constant and inevitable reality of God's wrath.²⁴

For the Hebrews the law functioned in two ways: to act as the boundaries within which Israel should act to avoid God's wrath, and conversely, to act as a standard, a foil against which Israel's disobedience was pointed out by the prophets. There were no magical practices by which Israel avoided Yahweh's wrath. Only by acting

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 42.

within the conditions of the covenant could the Hebrews be assured of God's free act of mercy which would avert his wrath.

The Old Testament describes God's wrath as a power which is controlled in a personal, subjective, and willful manner, much the same as a human emotion. It is not the consequence of an objective power controlled by fate.²⁵ Divine wrath is an emotional upset in God which God directs at those who disobey his laws and reject his love. Although Israel felt all nations to be subject to this cosmic phenomenon of divine wrath, Israel herself was especially vulnerable because of the unique self-conscious relation she felt in being chosen by Yahweh. Therefore, an act of disobedience within this community of the covenant constituted an especially grave act of ingratitude and unfaithfulness against God's holy love, while the disobedience of other nations fell outside the context of an explicit covenant faith. This did not remove the other nations from the arena of God's wrath; it, however, did emphasize the special sense of chosenness and obedience Israel felt toward Yahweh.

Although the Old Testament does make implicit connections between man's disobedience (especially Israel's) toward God, and the experience of divine wrath, God's wrath is never really explicitly made the divine reaction to human disobedient behavior.²⁶ Job, not knowing the reason for his deluge of problems, turned from a perception of an angry God to the God of righteousness. For Kleinknecht

²⁵*Ibid.*, IV, 48.

²⁶*Ibid.*, IV, 48f.

this offered twofold evidence that in the final analysis men could neither understand nor escape divine wrath, yet they somehow affirmed and petitioned God's justice and righteousness as having ultimate sway over his wrath. "Yahweh's wrath with regard to Israel is the reverse side of his love for them . . . we see how mercy and compassion can restrain the overflowing wrath of Yahweh and how compassion retains the victory."²⁷ (See Is. 54:8-10.) Unlike holiness or righteousness, wrath never forms one of the permanent attributes of the God of Israel.²⁸

3. Summary

1. Wrath in the Old Testament applies to divine wrath in the large majority of the time.
2. Divine wrath is inherently connected to Yahweh's covenant with Israel.
3. Divine wrath is conceived as personal, and emotional, not the function of objective fate.
4. At first, collective groups were seen as the objects of divine wrath--viz., Israel and the other nations. Later writers saw individuals also as the objects as divine wrath.
5. Divine wrath functions in history and at the end of time, with the distinction between the two often hard to determine.

²⁷*Ibid.*, IV, 50.

²⁸Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, I, 261.

6. Divine wrath remains essentially an inescapable mystery, the cause of which defies human understanding. It is dominated by and never separated from God's love.

CHAPTER II

JESUS' EXPRESSION OF WRATH AND THE PROBLEM OF THE INCARNATION

A. WRATH OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Kleinknecht, after discussing God's wrath in the Septuagint and then God's wrath in Late Judaism, goes on to discuss wrath in the New Testament. I will continue my summary at this point. Kleinknecht commences this section by dealing with the wrath of man. Since human wrath is the major focal point of this paper, I will deal with it later in greater detail, moving immediately to a summary of Kleinknecht's section concerning the wrath of God in the New Testament.

God's wrath in the New Testament is not an emotional phenomenon in the same way it appears in the Old Testament. God's wrath in the New Testament is interpreted primarily as the effects and consequences of divine judgment and intervention, not as a state of mind or an emotion. Also the New Testament excludes any conception of God's wrath as an irrational, enigmatic or unbridled expression of vengeance. Kleinknecht also concludes that divine wrath in the New Testament does not endure forever, although some passages in the Synoptics and in Paul are inconsistent with this general observation.

Kleinknecht firmly disputes the notion that the Old Testament portrays a God of wrath and vengeance, while the New Testament portrays a God of love and mercy. In both the Old and the New Testament,

God's wrath is tied closely to his love and mercy.¹ Thus, divine wrath in the New Testament expressed a theological understanding much more than a psychological understanding. The announcement of the impending ὀργή θεοῦ by both John the Baptist and Jesus, and the later elaboration of this motif in Paul and the Book of Revelation makes the concept of divine wrath more than just an extraneous remnant from the Old Testament notion of Law. Divine wrath is tightly bound to the Good News of God's grace, love, and mercy. Paul, in 15 out of 18 texts, speaks of ὀργή without the qualifying genitive (τοῦ) θεοῦ,² leading some critics to conclude that Paul saw wrath as an entity independent, outside of God, much like some traditions in Judaism considered ὀργή to be a being, independent and outside God.³

However, this dualistic conception has analogies in two other traditions. In Judaism, wrath is one of two fundamental forces of God. [The Elohim tradition associates wrath with the quality of justice while the name Yahweh is associated with the quality of mercy.]

¹Hermann Kleinknecht, J. Fichtner, and G. Stählin, "Wrath," in *Bible Key Words* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), IV, 82.

²*Ibid.*, IV, 84.

³Passages in Is. 13:5 and Jer. 50:25 which speak of the Lord's weapons of wrath and indignation lend the impression that these entities exist apart from God. Moreover, God says: "my wrath upheld me" in Is. 63:5, adding further to the image that wrath exists outside God. This proposition that wrath exists outside of God is weak considering the metaphorical nature of the descriptions of wrath. These metaphors certainly do not exclude an integral concept of wrath, they only point to a distinctive characteristic within the Jewish understanding of their God.

The second major possible source for interpreting wrath apart from God in Paul came from the notion of fatalism in antiquity which influenced New Testament Christianity. If wrath were conceived in these terms, it would be "a counterpart to the εἰμαρμένη (destiny) of the Greeks and/or the *Fatum* of the Romans."⁴ However, in both the Old and New Testament ὀργή differs by the fact that God always controls and guides it. Kleinknecht summarizes: "It must not be concluded from the fact that θεου is frequently lacking that ὀργή is felt even by Paul to be an independent hypostasis."⁵ There existed no elements of fatalism or dualism in New Testament divine wrath. In addition to his affirmation of a basic unity, Kleinknecht elaborates that divine wrath includes both the elements of God's "indignation at evil" (again, not in the Old Testament sense of an emotional disturbance), as well as God's active intervention and judgment on these evils. While these distinctions can hardly be separated, both aspects of divine valuation as well as historic consequence for evil are included in New Testament divine wrath.

Some theologians, e.g., Marcion, concluded that if God is really love, then he surely cannot be angry. Yet always in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the teaching of God's love, whether by the prophets, or rabbis, or by Jesus or Paul, was always accompanied by the teaching of God's wrath. Unless the severity of the

⁴Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 85.

⁵*Ibid.*, IV, 86.

wrath is known, there could not be adequate appreciation for God's compassion. And only the person who experienced God's compassion has any idea how great God's wrath could be. Kleinknecht interprets Rm. 9:22 saying that God restrains his vessels of wrath which he has stored to make known his power in order that his grace might be known. "The manifestation of wrath is the indispensable foil for the manifestation of grace."⁶

God's wrath is an expression of his righteousness (δικαιοσύνη). Since man lives in sin (Rm. 3:5-8), God is justified to inflict his wrath on all of mankind. Man, realizing his sin, knows himself to deserve condemnation and wrath, and knows this to be God's repugnance against sin and evil . . . at base, an expression of his righteousness. Paul goes on in Rm. 3:21-26 saying that in the gift of Jesus Christ God further expressed his righteousness. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ will be justified by that faith.

Bornkamm comments on Rm. 1:17ff. that while God's righteousness is revealed directly only from the New Testament message through faith (vs. 17), God's wrath is revealed through the natural order, even to men of no faith in Jesus Christ (vs. 18). All men experience God's wrath because all men live under the evils which are inherent in the human condition. The purpose of Rm. 1:18-3:20 is "to show the lostness of the whole world in sin and its subjugation to the

⁶*Ibid.*, IV, 90.

punishment under the law from which no one is excepted."⁷

Paul adopts the notion of natural revelation of God's wrath from the Stoic influences of Hellenistic Judaism, a tradition in which "revelation" was tied primarily to the "mind" and to "knowledge of God."⁸ In this understanding it is assumed that knowledge of God is available to all men in the same way that reasonable knowledge of the world is open to all men. Further, knowledge of God in this scheme stands in basic agreement with reasonable knowledge of all other natural phenomena. But Paul uses the vehicle of "natural revelation," giving it new direction and meaning. While he rejects any concept of a graduating, reasonable accessibility to the knowledge of God by the human intellect, Paul affirms that the wrath of God--man's experience of lostness, sin, and wickedness--dominates the world and all of mankind. This is the natural "knowledge of God" by which man perceives his condition, and against which the righteousness of God has meaning. Men, ignorant or knowledgeable, righteous or unrighteous, are aware of this negative reality. Furthermore, all men inevitably participate in this condition which Paul labeled sin. It transcends the range of individual choice and outstrips the power of individual decision.

Under this reality of God's wrath the Hellenistic notion, "knowledge of God," offers no salvation; in fact, dependence upon

⁷Günther Bornkamm, *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 48.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 50.

conceptual knowledge *about* God only aggravates the schism between man and God, making man an evaluator of his ideas about God, rather than a responder to God in terms of praise, devotion, and obedience.⁹

Bornkamm interprets Paul as saying that man's failure and trappedness in sin cannot be traced to a lack of knowledge or wrong knowledge about God, but to man's failure in denying obedience to God.¹⁰

B. WRATH PORTRAYED IN JESUS' LIFE

In his next section Kleinknecht discusses how divine wrath is manifested in the New Testament. He begins with wrath as it was portrayed by Jesus. I first want to devote attention to the life of Jesus, looking at the anger which the New Testament attributed to him personally. Jesus' anger is seldom denoted by the word ὀργή. It does occur in Mk. 3:5 when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath and reacted angrily to the hardness of the Pharisees. Secondly, ὀργισθεὺς appeared in Mk. 1:41 as a variant reading from text D (meaning angered, not moved with pity), which Kleinknecht prefers. In this passage Jesus healed a leper by touching him, then sternly warned him to tell no one. The word for sternly warned, ἐμβριμάομαι, is included by Kleinknecht as an anger-implying word. In an earlier Greek form, it had meant "snort," connecting it to the organ of anger in Hebrew. (See page 7.) In other New Testament passages unrelated to Jesus it denotes scolding, censure, and

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56f.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

indignation. Ἐμβριμάομαι appears in relation to Jesus in Mk. 1:43, (see immediately above), and in Mk. 9:30 in a similar circumstance in which Jesus had healed two blind men and sternly warned them to tell no one. Kleinknecht speculates Jesus' indignation was in anticipation of their disobedience to his command of silence.¹¹ Also connected here was the church's indignation at fallacious Christological understanding of Jesus as merely a miracle worker. In Jn. 11:33 and 38 the word implied that Jesus was moved deeply and troubled in relation to the death of Lazarus. Kleinknecht acknowledges that much debate exists regarding Jesus' upset in this story. He feels the troubledness was due to the lack of faith on the part of the Jews.

Although ὀργή and its variant forms appear only twice in describing Jesus, the New Testament alludes to the fact of Jesus' anger in many other passages. In Mk. 4:10, the temptation narrative, Jesus spoke angrily to Satan. As well, in the Petrine Confession (Mt. 16:23) Jesus expressed anger, commanding Satan, "Get behind me." Jesus rebuked the demons and the unclean spirit in Mk. 1:25, 9:25, and Lk. 4:41. Jesus was disturbed by the murderous threats of men in Jn. 8:44. He was obviously angry at the Pharisees in Mt. 12:34 and 23:33: "You brood of vipers." The same was true in Mt. 15:7: "You hypocrites." In Mt. 17:17 Jesus censured his disciples for lack of faith. Lack of faith, it seems, provoked in Jesus a mixed reaction of anger and pity (Mk. 3:5), especially toward the Pharisees.

¹¹ Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 93n.

It has no doubt a twofold cause: first the wrath of the merciful one toward the legal-minded who will not accept mercy as the new way of salvation, and who therefore allow themselves to be driven to mercilessness and actually to deadly enmity (cf. Mk. 3:6).¹²

The lack of mercilessness and the evoked anger will be discussed more thoroughly when I consider the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18:23-35) [see below, p. 44].

Lastly, Jesus was filled with anger at the cities which had not repented in response to his mighty works (Mt. 11:20), and he was outraged at the traders in the temple who by dishonoring the temple showed that they did not take God seriously (Mt. 21:12f., Mk. 11:15ff., Lk. 19:45f., and John 2:13-16).

1. Tension between the Humanity and Divinity of Jesus

At this point I will diverge from my summarizing of Kleinknecht to a criticism of his conclusion. The historical dilemma of balancing Jesus' humanity with his divinity reoccurs in this question of the meaning of Jesus' wrath. On one hand Kleinknecht contends that Jesus' anger confirmed that he was a human being of flesh and blood, . . . and human emotions. This humanness was contrasted with the philosophical, unmoved impassiveness of the Stoics.¹³ Jesus had human feelings and he expressed them much the same way other men did. But Kleinknecht goes on to say, "Yet it is never really a human anger; it always implies something of the manner of God's anger."¹⁴ Alas the dilemma. In emphasizing Jesus' humanity, the divinity

¹²*Ibid.*, IV, 94.

¹³*Ibid.*, IV, 92.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

attributed to him gets neglected. But if too much emphasis is placed on his divinity, his humanness becomes a hollow Arian crust, and the Christological balance is destroyed. I think Kleinknecht, by placing his discussion of Jesus' anger exclusively under the category of the manifestations of divine wrath, mistakenly emphasizes too greatly Jesus' divinity to the neglect of his humanity. In this way substantial evaluation of human expression of anger has been bypassed by removing it from the human realm and attributing it to God via the divinity of Jesus. In that Christianity claims that Jesus provided the model of what it means to be human, it is critical that we do not measure his humanness by our experience of humanness, that is, consider him more human because he expressed anger like we do. On the contrary, we need to measure our own experience of humanness by the standard or model he provided, i.e., being angry as Jesus was angry is a valid aspect of human experience.

I am aware of the polar tension inherent here. Had not the early church Christians in the post-resurrection experience perceived that in Jesus, God had entered history, they would not have claimed that he was the model for human existence. Jesus' finality as a model for human existence is inseparably tied to his divinity. Therefore, his divinity cannot be neglected. Nevertheless, Kleinknecht provides only a confused statement regarding Jesus' anger and how it was connected to God's anger . . . "implies something of the manner of God's anger." He thereby neglects the implications that Jesus' anger has for human experience.

2. Conflict with Hellenism

Jesus' expressions of his humanity have always been slightly problematic for the church, and many debates took place in the early church reconciling the historical accounts of Jesus with the post-resurrection concepts of Christ which tended toward more Christological embellishing as time passed. Jesus' very human agony on the cross in Mark and Matthew proved embarrassing to the early church which was trying to function in a Hellenistic culture whose Stoic norms demanded the devaluation of immoderately expressed human feelings--including pain. The case in point from which I intend to draw an analogy is Mark 15:34 and 37 where Jesus in an expression of abandonment cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"--and in verse 37 where the text alludes to Jesus' last loud cry. Both these verses express raw human fear of abandonment as well as physical pain and exhaustion. Oscar Cullmann in his essay on immortality and resurrection (Cullmann in Stendahl) contends that these statements of Jesus' mortality and human upset became embarrassing to the early church as it encountered the philosophical tenets of Greek and Roman Stoicism. Jesus, compared to the Greek standard of humanity, Socrates, did not face death with very much composure. Cullmann draws the comparisons and concludes that later gospel writers modified the portraits of Jesus to approximate more closely the less emotional Greek ideal of humanity by mellowing and modifying Jesus' expressions of pain on the cross.¹⁵ Matthew's account of the last moments of the crucifixion

¹⁵Oscar Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of

is the same as Mark's, but Luke's is modified to include dialogue with the criminals, without a final cry, but an articulate statement, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." The account in John more closely parallels Socrates' death in its composure than it does the other Synoptic accounts of the crucifixion. Perfection was associated with the Greek concept of divinity, and Jesus' unbridled emotion did not seem very divine. Consequently, his humanity got reinterpreted by Hellenistic standards for divinity.

I suspect that much the same thing occurred with some of the angry expressions attributed to Jesus. They too went through a process of Christological review and modification. The textual problem in Mk. 1:41 between ὀργισθεὶς and σπλαγχνισθεὶς (feeling sympathy or pity) may well be a manifestation of the early church not being able to make "proper sense" out of Jesus being angry in this particular situation. Kleinknecht explains that the ὀργισθεὶς of D is to be preferred to the usual σπλαγχνισθεὶς which is more easily accounted for. . . .¹⁶ Bultmann thinks that Mk. 1:40-41 was drawn from Q source which originated in Palestine, providing a more Jewish picture of Jesus than Mark's own material which was influenced more by Hellenism.¹⁷ If this is the case, the Palestinian background would seemingly have

the Dead?" in Krister Stendahl (ed.) *Immortality and Resurrection* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 17ff.

¹⁶Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 93n.

¹⁷Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 240.

been more tolerant of the anger expressed by Jesus because of the wrath of God tradition from the Old Testament. I speculate the change to σπλαγχνισθεὺς may have been the result of Hellenistic influences.

3. Christological Formulations

In the other passages in which Jesus' anger was alluded to without the express use of ὀργή, Christological formulations appeared more explicitly and his anger more clearly expressed the wrath of God. Both Mt. 4:10--Jesus' rebuke of Satan after the temptations--and Mt. 16:23 and Mk. 8:33--Jesus' rebuke of Peter and command for Satan to "get behind me"--imply expression of anger directed toward Satan, or more specifically the Christological formulations which Satan or Peter had offered up. Both of these texts represented post-resurrection experiences of the early church in which the church was trying to forge out an acceptable Christological formula. By attributing to Jesus the rejection of the unacceptable concepts of Christ and the implied forms the church should take, segments of the church in these early churches sought to solidify and justify their own positions. In the temptation text, the church rejected a worldly, political, or miracle worker messiahship. In the Petrine Confession texts, the church, speaking through the mouth of Jesus again, rejected a messiahship and a church that was oriented to man's temptation to avoid suffering.¹⁸ These statements reveal more about the early church

¹⁸James M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (Naperville: Allenson, 1957), p. 52.

struggles than they reveal about the person, Jesus of Nazareth. The wrath revealed is more clearly connected to a concept of the wrath of God which rejected diabolical conceptions about the nature of obedience, than it is connected to the expression of human anger.

Considering that the development of the New Testament Synoptics took place within this context of controversy and growth, I acknowledge Kleinknecht's point that much of Jesus' anger must be viewed not as personal expressions of emotion by Jesus. However, I am still not willing to concede that it is appropriate to lump all of Jesus' anger into a category representing the wrath of God. Kleinknecht needs to take more seriously the origin of these statements of Jesus' anger in that they originated in the Christological controversies of the early church, they were placed on the lips of an historical person to lend them "divine authority," and they represented an understanding of God and God's will held by a particular segment of the church.

The core assertion for the early church as well as the church through history has been that God in Jesus actively entered into history and the human experience. Much of the early church's energy was devoted to the reaffirmation of Jesus' humanity which seems to stand in continual threat of being negated by his divinity. In each of the New Testament Christological statements multiple affirmations were being made--a particular conception of the church which was implied in an articulated Christology, and that that conception was tied to the man Jesus, the historical incarnation of God. With each such Christological affirmation, whether it portrayed Jesus as a

teacher, rabbi, savior, miracle worker, divine man, or messiah, Jesus' humanity was likewise affirmed. So the anger Jesus expressed reflected his humanity in which the church firmly believed, as well as the church's intense commitment to what it experienced in Jesus Christ as divine and eternal. With respect these latter elements of divinity and eternality, Jesus' anger was transparent to a manifestation of the wrath of God. Paradoxically, of course, Jesus' humanity cannot be separated from his divinity. Likewise the expression of his human anger cannot be separated from his expression of the wrath of God.

4. Jesus: Eschatological Judge

Returning to the summary of Kleinknecht: In other passages which spoke of Jesus' wrath, Jesus was portrayed in the role of eschatological judge. Jesus expressed anger toward the fig tree which yielded no fruit, the eschatological parallel being that divine wrath will be incumbent upon those who withhold the fruits of repentance.¹⁹ "This is the wrath of the eschatological judge who has the authority to destroy" and "to exclude from the community of God."²⁰ Jesus' indignation in driving the trader out of the temple revealed eschatological elements (Mt. 21:12f., Mk. 11:15-17., Lk. 19:45f., Jn. 2:13ff).

The Synoptic accounts of the temple incident all attributed to Jesus a messianic self-consciousness: "My house shall be called

¹⁹Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 96.

²⁰*Ibid.*

a house of prayer . . . " Kleinknecht by implication seemingly attributes to Jesus this same messianic self-consciousness.

It can be seen . . . that Jesus was conscious of the fact, and often demonstrated it in his sayings and parables that when his anger is provoked, it is fundamentally already the manifestation of the eschatological wrath of God.²¹

I am not convinced that Jesus thought his anger equaled or represented the wrath of God. It was in the post-Easter experience of the young church when Jesus' anger was connected with the wrath of God, making Jesus the historical and personal manifestation of the latter. As a result, the implied personal claim for divinity by Jesus in the temple was placed back into his life, being attached to this imaginary scene,²² by the authors of the Synoptics.

Kleinknecht claims the connection between Jesus' wrath and the wrath of God became obvious in looking at the objects of Jesus' anger. "It (Jesus' anger) always implies something of the manner of God's anger. This is seen above all in those things at which and because of which Jesus is angry."²³ For the Christian community this reasoning impresses me as backward. It assumes that we know the objects of God's anger before and independent of the church's response to Jesus, that Jesus' anger was then equated with God's wrath by comparing the objects of both and concluding that since the objects were the same, then Jesus' anger equals God's anger. On the contrary, the

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²³Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 92.

church claimed that in knowing Jesus, it had known God. In the post-Easter experience, the church affirmed the divinity of Jesus, and pointed toward him as the incarnation of God. So the objects of Jesus' anger were then understood as the objects of God's anger. The experience of Jesus in history pointed to what God was like, not as Kleinknecht implies, an experience of God establishing the expectations of what a messiah ought to be like.

Eschatological wrath of God was also indicated by the word ὀργή appearing with variations of ἔρχομαι (I. Thes. 1:10, Eph. 5:6, Rev. 11:18--wrath to come), μέλλω (Mt. 3:7--wrath to come), and σῶζω (Rm. 5:9--saved from the wrath of God, and ἀποκαλύπτω (Rm. 1:18--apocalyptic wrath). The images of fire (Mt. 3:10-12), the cup (Rev. 14:10) and the wine press (Rev. 19:15) had an eschatological stamp. The New Testament opened with John the Baptist preaching the "wrath to come" (ὀργὴ μέλλουσα) and ended with the same theme in the Revelation to John.²⁴ Jesus used the word ὀργή only once in Lk. 21:23, describing the destruction and distress of the coming of the Kingdom.

While eschatological wrath is an integral theme in the New Testament, Kleinknecht emphasizes as well the contemporary character of divine wrath which Jesus revealed through his life and parables. God's judgment functions not only at the end of history, but also within history. While the incident with the fig tree revealed what might be anticipated on the eschatological Day of Yahweh, or Day of

²⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 99.

Wrath, it as well illustrated the quality of existence within historical time lived in disobedience and outside God's promise. Often it is difficult to distinguish the eschatological elements from the contemporary elements in the wrath passages. Frequently both are mixed. The verb ὀργίζομαι appears in an eschatological sense in three texts-- Mt. 22:7 and Lk. 14:21 within the parables of the Great Supper, as well as in Mt. 18:34, at the conclusion of the parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

Some detailed consideration will now be given to the parabolic form as it appears in the New Testament; then attention will be focused directly on the manifestations of anger in the two above mentioned parables.

C. THE PARABLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Jesus' Parables as Language Event

Jesus' parables are based on and use examples from the ordinary, everyday experience of the common people of his time. The themes of the parables are secular, yet they contain experientially for their hearers the germ of the New Testament Good News. Robert Funk comments, "The secularity of the parables may give expression to the only way of legitimately speaking of the incursion of the divine into history."²⁵ By using a religiously neutral but imaginal language, the parables engaged the biblical listeners in a readily identifiable

²⁵Robert W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic and Word of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 154.

set of circumstances which was, by and large, common to their experience, although most of the parables had usual features included as attention-getting elements. Religious faith was not a presupposition for understanding the parables.²⁶ Linnemann and Jeremias contend that the parables were in fact used in argumentation to reduce to absurdity the logic of the opponents.²⁷ Although this seems possible, the parables are not that tight logically, which leaves room for much broader involvement on the part of hearers, with a more open-ended interpretation. Chances are that parables were used by Jesus (or the early church) in a specific historical situation, but their impact and meaning is hardly bound to that given and limited set of circumstances. We could not hope to recover the exact conditions under which a given parable was used, although such information would help. (Via contends that a parable cannot be tied to specific historical circumstances without making it an allegory.²⁸) As it stands, the metaphorical language of the parables did circumvent the necessity for a commonly accepted religious dogma. The parables themselves create a language event (Via), a happening (Robinson) that compared two discrete, but not entirely comparable events, A and B. Along the story line of A, an understanding of and a participation in B, is

²⁶Dan Otto Via, Jr., *The Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 31.

²⁷Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1966), p. 20.

²⁸Via, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

created without mentioning B expressly.²⁹ The analogous reality is seen *through* the language by virtue of participation in the language. The metaphor functions to provide a glimpse through the mundane experience to see the mystery which contains a momentary embodiment of the past and future, background and foreground.³⁰

The parable is ordered in such a way as to get in gear with the hearer, engage him in the movement of the story, and release him at its end back into his own situation in such a way that the parable happens to the situation.³¹

Alas, this is the happening of which Robinson speaks. For Funk, the parable shatters the old way of viewing reality. For Via, new possibilities are called into history. All the authors emphasize that the parable called for a judgment by the listeners. The parable draws the listener into an old reality, then confronts him with a new reality, inviting him to participate according to his new understanding. The listener experiences a new perspective which has been lifted out of his own common experience. Hence, the drama of religious understanding most consistently emerges out of the everyday, common events of life. Critical options for new life exist in the moment, not at some elusive future time--a radical sense of both eschatology and wrath.

²⁹Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 145.

³¹James M. Robinson, "Jesus' Parables as God Happening," in *Jesus and the Historian* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 142.

2. The Function of Anger in the Parables

Anger occurs explicitly in two parables: the Great Banquet (Mt. 22:2-10 and Lk. 14:16-24) and the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18:23-35). At this point I feel uneasy in using the parables in the manner I intend, for I do not seek to interpret the content or to extensively exegete the text. Based on the previous discussion about how the parables in general "function," I am interested in how these parables "function," and especially the role of human anger in them. That is, in order that the parables create a language happening, certain assumptions about human anger were functioning at the telling of the parables. However, there has been nothing explicitly written by recognized scholars about using this particular approach to the parables, especially on the subject of anger. Nevertheless, much of my thesis seems implied in the discussions of parables by Funk and Robinson.

Funk's analytical outline of the parable helps communicate the content and make textual comparisons.³²

a. AN OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET Luke 14:16-24 Matthew 22: 2-10

I. Introduction

A. The host

- | | | |
|--------|---------------|-------|
| 1. Lk. | A certain man | vs 16 |
| 2. Mt. | A kind | vs 2 |

³²Funk, *op. cit.*, pp. 165f.

B. The banquet

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Lk. Gave a great banquet | vs 16 |
| 2. Mt. Gave a marriage feast for his son | vs 2 |

C. The host had already invited those who are socially worthy. (Implied in both texts.)

II. Development and Crisis

A. The banquet is ready--Lk. 14:17; Mt. 22:2-3

B. The announcement

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Lk. A servant sent to announce "all is now ready" | vs 17 |
| 2. Mt. Servants sent to call those who were invited | vs 3 |

C. The refusals

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Lk. All the guests made excuses | |
| a. bought a field, must see | vs 18 |
| b. bought five oxen, must examine | vs 19 |
| c. married a wife, cannot come | vs 20 |
| 2. Mt. They would not come | vs 3 |
| a. host sent other servants to announce that all is ready | vs 4 |
| b. they made light of it (second announcement) and went off | vs 5a |
| 1) one went to his farm | vs 5b |
| 2) another to his business | vs 5c |
| 3) the rest seized and killed the servants | vs 6 |

III. Denouncement

A. The anger

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Lk. The servant reports back, and the master is angry | vs 21a |
| 2. Mt. The king was angry | |
| a. sent troops and destroyed the murderers and burned the city | vs 7 |
| b. those invited were not worthy (The judgment) | vs 8 |

B. The new invitations

1. Lk. Servants were sent to invite the poor
and maimed of the city vs 21c
 - a. room was still left vs 22
 - b. sent again to invite people
from the highways and hedges vs 23
2. Mt. Servants were sent to invite those
they found in the thoroughfares vs 9

C. The hall was filled

1. Lk. (Only implied)
2. Mt. vs 10

D. The judgment upon those originally invited

1. Lk. None who were invited shall taste
my banquet vs 24
2. Mt. (See above: III, A, 2, b) vs 8

The parable of the Great Banquet appears in a much briefer and more authentic parabolic form in the Gospel of Thomas. The Gospel of Thomas and the triadic arrangement of the invitations lead Funk to conclude that the parable is secondary to both Matthew and Luke.³³ Most scholars agree that Matthew has allegorized the material more extensively than Luke. The changing of a man to a king and the banquet to a wedding feast for his son implies divine parallels since king was a rabbinical symbol for God.³⁴ Jeremias suggests that the banquet is the "Feast of Salvation" and the whole parable, including the additional parable of the wedding garment in Matthew 22:11-14

³³*Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁴Sherman E. Johnson, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew: Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), VII, 514ff.

allegorically represents the history of salvation. The three invitations represented the prophets and their rejection, the Apostles' mission to Jerusalem and their martyrdom, and finally the mission to the Gentiles. The parable of the garment in this case represents the last judgment, the proper clothing being repentance.³⁵ According to Jeremias the son in Matthew represented Jesus, while no such allegorical allusion was evident in Luke.

Luke's addition of a second invitation to the uninvited reveals an allegorical redaction which was not present in the Thomas or Matthean versions. This additional invitation to "the people from the highways and hedges" represents Luke's interest in defending the mission to the Gentiles.³⁶ The punitive expedition in Mt. vs. 7 was also interjected for allegorical reasons, possibly as an allusion to the Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Regardless of the purpose for its placement, it is tied to vs. 6, the murder of the servants, which serves to justify the expedition. Both verses break the pace of the parable.³⁷

Despite the Gospel variants, the situation of the parable is clear. A host has invited worthy guests to his great banquet and the invited guests refuse for one reason or another. In Matthew the

³⁵Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 169; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), pp. 53f.

³⁶Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 36f.; Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 175; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1936), pp. 121f.

³⁷Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

messenger-servants were even killed by the invited guests, which aggravates the intensity of an already bad situation. The host consequently gets angry, (although no mention of wrath is made in the Gospel of Thomas version³⁸) and invites the socially unacceptable people--the poor, the maimed, the street people, and those in the countryside. It is these latter folks whom the host finds more receptive and appreciative of his invitation and his banquet.

Whether or not this parabolic story was understood as an allegorical allusion to the history of salvation or as a partial justification for the mission to the Gentiles, it is a simple story which at its essential level strikes the imagination, understanding, and appreciation of the hearer, regardless of his religious background. A man who has prepared a banquet for invited guests experiences indifferent, even harsh, rejection by the guests. It is of course understandable why he is angry. The implication of the assumption behind the telling of the parable is, "Wouldn't you be angry, too, if you experienced the same situation?" As Jeremias illustrates, the listener empathizes, saying, "Yes, that is how it is."³⁹ The parable relies on analogy and empathy. The story must be analogous to general human experience, and the story must elicit the empathy of the listeners, so they will identify with the given situation and agree with the subsequent outcome of the parable.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁹Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

My concern is that the parable assumes a healthy, justified anger, common to the human experience, and that by empathizing with an imaginary situation analogous to people's common experience, this anger will be activated in a way that connects the character of the story with the listener. This link in the Great Banquet parable rests exclusively on the assumption that the listeners are capable of anger and will share the anger of the host. Whether the anger is mentioned explicitly in the parable, as it is not in the Gospel of Thomas, seems to be a mute point, since it, as well as other emotions, functions at the sub-verbal level even if they are not identified. Emotions are usually not mentioned explicitly, but are left to the imagination of the hearer.⁴⁰ Based on this assumption that anger connects the host in the parable with the hearers of the parable, the groundwork is laid for the denouncement and self-reflective evaluation at the conclusion of the parable.

Jeremias thinks the parable was used by Jesus to say in essence that "you who hear this are like those who turned down the invitation to this Great Banquet." If this were the case and this new reality were to break in on those who were Jesus' opponents, or opposing forces in the early church, the success of the parable rested on the power it held to elicit identification with a common human experience, despite social, religious, and political commitments.

⁴⁰Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

b. AN OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT
Matthew 18:23-35

- I. Introduction--A king wished to settle accounts with his servants vs 23b
- II. Development of the situation
 - A. The episode of the merciful king
 - 1. When the king began the reckoning, a servant owing 10,000 talent was brought to him vs 24
 - 2. Servant could not pay vs 25a
 - 3. King ordered servant, his family and all possession sold so payment could be made vs 25b
 - 4. Servant fell on knees, pleaded for patience, and promised to pay vs 26
 - 5. The king had pity, released the servant and forgave him the debt vs 27
 - B. The episode of the unmerciful servant
 - 1. The servant, who was just forgiven, came upon a fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii vs 28a
 - 2. He seized him and demanded payment vs 28b
 - 3. His fellow servant fell down, pleaded for patience and promised to pay vs 29
 - 4. The servant refused and imprisoned the debtor till he should pay the debt vs 30
 - C. The judgment
 - 1. Fellow servants witnessed the action, were distressed, and reported it to the king vs 31
 - 2. The king summoned the first servant and denounced him vss 32 & 33

- a. "You wicked servant! I forgave you
all that debt because you besought me; vs 32b
- b. and should not you have had mercy on
your fellow servant, as I had mercy
on you?" vs 33
- 3. In anger the king delivered him to the
jailers till he should pay all his debt vs 34
- III. Conclusion--so also will my heavenly Father do to
you, if you do not forgive your brother vs 35

This graphic story reveals the changing fate of a king's servant. The king must have been a rich and important master. The size of the debt, 10,000 talents,⁴¹ aside from the rest of his wealth, indicates the master was probably royalty.⁴² The drama of the situation speaks for itself. Linnemann emphasizes that the mercy of the king in forgiving entirely the huge debt far surpasses the pleas of the servant who merely pleaded for patience, and promised to pay back the debt. (The feasibility of that promise is in question considering the enormity of the debt.) The magnitude of the debt and the king's mercy is then juxtaposed over against the minor debt of 10 denarii (approximately \$20) owed the forgiven servant, and his unmerciful actions toward the debtor. The situation is so constructed that the listeners are drawn into the drama in a way that they will agree with the conclusions of the king. It is noteworthy that the unmerciful servant did act within the dictates and prerogatives of the law by

⁴¹According to Sherman, *op. cit.*, pp. 476f., one talent would have equaled approximately \$1,000, so 10,000 talents would have equaled about one million dollars.

⁴²Via, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

demanding repayment of the debt and imprisoning the debtor upon his failure to pay up, just as the king could have justifiably according to the law jailed him for failure to pay. However, as Linnemann emphasizes, mercy has the character of an ordinance just as legal rights according to justice have the character of an ordinance.⁴³ The experience of the parable points to the affirmation that mercy is more characteristic of reality than is the quality of distributive justice. That is, the demands of mercy to act mercifully toward fellowmen surpass the demands of law to act only according to legal dictates toward fellowmen. Kleinknecht emphasizes that God's wrath is stirred by those who adopt legalism as a way of life, rejecting the way of love and mercy. This in turn drives the legalistic to uncharitable behavior towards fellowmen and a life of merciless enmity.⁴⁴

Linnemann aligns with Jeremias in viewing the parables as tools of argumentation in the Jewish scholarly tradition which were originally tied to one historical situation involving controversy with listeners of opposing points of view. In the case of the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, the opponents were the Jews, especially the Pharisees, the advocates of the Law.⁴⁵ Linnemann does not specify at which level of the tradition this parable was used in this manner,

⁴³Linnemann, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁴⁴Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 94.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, IV, 108.

although he hints that Jesus probably uttered it to opposing forces, viz., the Jews.⁴⁶

Most scholars concur that vs 35--"So also my heavenly Father will do . . . if you do not forgive your brother . . ."--was a redactional addition by Matthew which both sounds like an appendage to an already completed story and changes the normally open-ended, decide-for-yourself character of most parables. The character of verse 35 sounds like a threat, itself legalistic in nature.

Via sees the message of the parable integrated throughout the story. He agrees that vs 35 is an addition, yet gives the whole parable an existential interpretation. The message is not, "Be merciful or God will condemn you," or "God forgives us after we forgive others" as vs 35 might imply if interpreted legalistically. Rather the message is that God has been merciful to men without men warranting that mercy and in this way God has conferred on men the capacity to forgive. Men are now free to respond to their brothers in mercy. That is, he who has experienced forgiveness will in turn forgive.⁴⁷ Interpreting vs 35 along these lines would mean that the natural consequences of not acting in mercy toward fellowmen will atrophy one's capacity for relatedness, one's own capacity to receive mercy and forgiveness.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Linnemann, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁷Via, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

Now to take a specific look at the function of wrath/anger in this parable. The specific mention of the king's anger (ὀργισθεὺς) in vs 34 must have some special import. Kleinknecht reports that in both the parables of the Great Banquet and the Unmerciful Servant, the anger of the king or master is the turning point in the story.⁴⁹ As in the previous parable, the anger of the listeners toward the lack of mercy shown by the forgiven servant is the "interlocking phenomenon"⁵⁰ which draws the listeners into the story and into agreement with the conclusion and actions of the king. This parable also assumes the existence of functioning human anger and assumes also that this anger can be pricked in a way that will help break open a new view of human existence--that is, existence under the reality of mercy, not legalism.

3. The Eschatological Wrath of God

In each of these parables the wrath of the king or master has of course been interpreted as the wrath of God, specifically the eschatological wrath of God.⁵¹ This interpretation does not essentially alter the character of my point, in that whether it's the eschatological wrath of God being portrayed or the human anger of a rejected host or indignant king, the success of the story rests in part on the capacity of the listener to experience an analogous anger.

⁴⁹Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰Linnemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 27f.

⁵¹Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*

Yet some consideration needs to be given to the notion of the eschatological wrath of God in these two parables. Whereas these parables involve the listeners in an experience which demands an immediate judgment on their lives (in the sense of a radical eschatology), they also spell out the character of the divine judgment at the end of history. The ὀργύζομαι form of ὀργή is used in the eschatological sense in the text of these parables, the only three times it is used this way in the New Testament.⁵²

Considering the astronomical size of the debt owed the king and the sentence (release would come only upon payment of the debt), verse 34 implies that the judgment of the eschatological wrath may be eternal. Furthermore, the word βασανιστᾶς, which translates as "jailers" in the R.S.V., also translates as "torturers," which intensifies the severity of an already bad state of affairs. Whereas Greek mythologies in the myths of Sisyphus and Prometheus leave no question as to the eternality of divine wrath, neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament portray divine wrath as eternal, although this Matthew passage seems to imply an eternality. Kleinknecht hints at a distinction between wrath and punishment, saying that verse 34 speaks of an eternal punishment, but not of eternal wrath.⁵³ My first reaction is, what could the difference be? Reflecting on the parable itself and further statements in Paul that the Law is a gift of God's

⁵²*Ibid.*, IV, 99.

⁵³*Ibid.*, IV, 105f.

which also brings wrath (Rm. 4:15), it occurs that continually rejecting God's mercy by acting unmercifully toward fellow human beings causes the continual experience of living under judgment, rather than living under mercy. The consequence of this style would of course be a life of eternal judgment, hence eternal punishment. On the other hand, when one accepts that love and mercy are more fundamental to reality than legal judgment, and one lives faithfully by this conviction, the punishment of wrath, the punishment of living outside relationships with fellowmen and God, is lifted so that a person can experience freedom from the Law and the freedom of eternal love.

It must be added that when eschatological wrath is understood in the radical, contemporary sense of Bultmann and Via, this eternality of punishment stands forever present, to be experienced the very moment when one violates or loses faith in the reality of essential mercy, just as that mercy stands forever present to be experienced the very moment one lives in conviction and faith that is real.

The life of faith frees one to live in mercy, which in turn points to the eternality of God's love and mercy, while the life of unfaith and judgment points to the eternality of God's wrath and judgment, and the consequent punishment. Both are inseparably bound together, and one would lose its meaning were it split off from the other.

Also the sense of contemporary wrath is inseparably bound to the sense of wrath to come by way of anticipation. When a person

experiences the present agony of the unmerciful life by separating himself from others through unmerciful acts, he has only more and intensified agony to anticipate for the future. Kleinknecht summarizes:

Everything depends on whether a man rejects Christ or appropriates what Christ is and brings--or more correctly, whether he lets himself be appropriated. He who rejects him remains under wrath; he who accepts him is free. *Either he must dread the wrath to come or love the present mercy . . .*⁵⁴

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 134.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW TESTAMENT'S EXPLICIT CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN ANGER

A. THE DISTINCTIONS IN THE WORDS FOR HUMAN WRATH

"Apart from the root word ὀργή, all derivations from the root ὀργή are used in the New Testament to denote only human wrath."¹ Kleinknecht contends that ὀργίζομαι in Mt. 18:34 (Unmerciful Servant) and Mt. 22:7 (Wedding Feast) uses human anger to portray God's anger (see above, pp. 38 and 44). When ὀργή itself is used to denote human anger, it is done interchangeably with θυμός. While ὀργή implies some purpose and deliberation, as in Js. 1:19, . . . "be slow to anger . . .", θυμός conveys a sudden burst of blazing passion and fury as in Luke 4:28 when the people of Nazareth angrily drove Jesus out of the synagogue and the town. Other words also convey anger with varying connotations. Παροργίζω (to make someone angry) and παροργισμός (anger) go beyond ὀργή, connoting an almost lasting bitterness. Kleinknecht points out that the change from ὀργίζομαι to παροργισμός (the only time it appears in the New Testament) in Eph. 4:26 is completely intentional.² Be angry (ὀργίζεσθε) but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger (παροργισμῷ). More detailed consideration

¹Hermann Kleinknecht, J. Fichtner, and G. Stählin, "Wrath," in *Bible Key Words* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), IV, 74.

²*Ibid.*

will be given to this passage later (see p.62). Παροργίζω appears only twice in the New Testament: in Rm. 10:19--God provoked Israel to jealousy and anger--and in Eph. 6:4 with the imperative, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger." ὀργίλος appears only once: Titus 1:7 . . . "For a bishop . . . must not be . . . quick-tempered." θυμόμακ appears in the New Testament only once in Mt. 2:16, denoting human wrath alone, i.e., portraying King Herod's rage at his realization that the wise men had tricked him.

B. THE DILEMMA OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

The New Testament gives no consistent or uniform evaluation of human anger, according to Kleinknecht.³ The writers of the New Testament were caught in a bind. On one hand, the Hebrew, Old Testament tradition gave liberal portrayals of a God who expressed divine wrath (although the later traditions eliminate much of the anthropomorphic character of wrath). On the other hand, the New Testament church was trying to speak in a Hellenistic culture in which emotions and behavioral extremes according to Stoic philosophical standards were evaluated negatively, whether they were manifested in gods or men. Hence the dilemma:

For if every stirring of wrath is automatically condemned, then statements about God's wrath must be explained away. But if on the contrary these statements are taken seriously, then in the human sphere too at least a certain limited right to wrath must be recognized.⁴

³*Ibid.*, IV, 75.

⁴*Ibid.*

Although Kleinknecht offers up an accurate portrayal of the dilemma, the interpretation he works out for the expressions of human wrath in the New Testament leads one to believe that the Greeks carried the day, and the New Testament evaluation of anger ended up less ambivalent than Kleinknecht anticipated it might, given the impinging historical factors. But I will let Kleinknecht first speak for himself.

According to Kleinknecht, the first concession the New Testament makes to human wrath comes in a recognition and acceptance of holy wrath as it was expressed by Jesus. Jesus hated what God hated; therefore, his anger equaled God's anger. This holy wrath is portrayed in Mk. 3:5 (the withered hand) and Jn. 11:33 and 38 (Jesus was deeply moved). These passages were considered above, as well as my criticism of this perspective of Jesus' anger (see pp. 25ff.).

Wrath is God's right and God's love includes righteous wrath, but . . . wrath is not man's right (James 1:20). In human existence love and wrath are mutually exclusive (I. Cor. 13:5). Kleinknecht cites only two passages in which human anger is attributed any positive value. God provoked Israel to jealousy and anger in Rm. 10:19 to stimulate some self-examination on Israel's part. This form of divinely precipitated indignation cannot be unequivocally described as human anger since it was provoked by God and allegedly justified by virtue of his provocation. The second text, II Cor. 7:11, parallels the first in that righteous indignation again resulted from self-examination and repentance, the connection between the human

indignation and God's will being very explicit. Apart from the qualified human wrath expressed in these two texts, human wrath is generally condemned elsewhere in the New Testament. "God's wrath is that of wounded love, man's wrath is that of indignant selfishness."⁵ Selfishness, being an expression of *hybris*, is necessarily directed against God, separating the individual from God and fellowmen. Hence the conclusion of James 1:20, "For the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God." Kleinknecht next moves to an exploration of Jesus' evaluation of human anger in the Sermon on the Mount. I have considered other sources in this section, expanding on the brief elaboration Kleinknecht gives this important text.

C. HUMAN ANGER IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Jesus comments explicitly on anger in the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. 5:21-26. Mt. 5:20 is an introductory statement added by the author to focus the subsequent material on the traditional interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees.⁶ The allusion to the decalogue and the use of *κρίσις* (meaning judgment in vs 21 and local court in 22a) and *συνέδριον* (sanhedrin or council in vs 22b) suggest a legal context. Betz proposes that the anger of which the passage speaks is anger which results in overt, legal disputes, not internal,

⁵*Ibid.*, IV, 76.

⁶Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 94.

unexpressed anger of the emotional, psychological nature.⁷ Verse 21 is the first of six antitheses, three of which are whole units lifted by Matthew from the authentic oral history of Jesus--vss 5:21ff., 27ff., and 33ff. (The other three antitheses--5:31ff., 38ff., and 43ff.--are later units constructed by Matthew or taken from Q.⁸) While the former three, the original three, explain Jesus' "outdoing" of a prohibition, according to Bornkamm, the latter three antitheses are completely "overthrown."

It needs to be understood that the first antithesis Jesus proposed was not a negation or contradiction of the sixth commandment of the decalogue, "You shall not kill." Jesus does, however, contradict the way in which the rabbinical tradition has interpreted the decalogue commandment.⁹ The phrase "you have heard . . ." is a formula which refers to historical tradition. Moreover, vs 21b elaborates the legal consequence for killing, i.e., liability to judgment. The interpretation is not part of the decalogue, and it is this interpretation which Jesus contradicted, "But I say to you everyone that is angry with his brother is liable to judgment." *Εὐχὴ* (without cause) which is found in the King James version (vs 22a) was a

⁷Hans Dieter Betz, Lecture at School of Theology at Claremont, March 11, 1971.

⁸Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 135.

⁹Betz, *op. cit.*; Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

secondary addition.¹⁰

In vs 22a the meaning of κρίσις changes from that in vs 21 (judgment), and it refers here to a local court,¹¹ whereas Davies considers that vss 21 and 22a are the original units, with 22b-24 added as explanation.¹² This conclusion disagrees with Kleinknecht who thinks the whole of 22 is genuine.¹³ As Davies points out though, vs 22a first puts anger on par with homicide, but then 22b and c introduce seeming gradations of anger which undermines the impact of the first statement. The contradiction indicates that 22b and c were later additions.¹⁴

There is a seeming development and build up from anger with one's brother which warrants action by the local court, to insults which make the offender liable to the action of the sanhedrin, and finally the accusation, "You fool!", warrants the hell of fire. Actually, the seriousness of neither the offenses nor the punishments intensifies as it seems. The passages of vs 22b and c are parallelisms which again illustrate vs 21 and 22a. To call a brother δακα was, according to Betz, tantamount to calling him a very vulgar name for which there seems to be no appropriately offensive translation. No difference of magnitude or jurisdiction existed between the local court

¹⁰Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 235.

¹³Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 77. ¹⁴Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

(κρίσις) of 22a and the council or sanhedrin (συνέδριον) of 22b. The latter could have referred to one of the following three courts: the court in Jerusalem or the district court (both Jewish), Betz contends that it in fact refers to the councils in the early Christian church which were organized to carry out the ethical imperatives of the scriptures. There is no explanation for the change from ῥακά in vs 22b to μωπέ in vs 22c, since they both imply the same intensity of abuse. Μωπέ means "empty headed fool." The implication here is that he who calls his brother ῥακά or μωπέ denies the relationship he has with the brother. Given the Jewish context, this imperative would have been inclusive only of Jews. That is, this context is one of inner-Jewish legal problems.

Jesus more accurately interpreted the commandment to mean that broken and distorted relationships which result from anger threaten the lives of human beings, and that to distort a relationship with a brother by verbally abusing him threatens his right to live. Therefore, under this new interpretation of the sixth commandment, Jesus pointed out that the meaning of the Torah imperative transcended the negative constriction, "Don't kill." It more significantly means, "Let other men live."¹⁵ Both Betz and Windisch correctly state that Jesus did not make messianic claims by setting aside the decalogue¹⁶ in this passage, but expanded the decalogue's meaning by rejecting the

¹⁵Betz, *op. cit.*

¹⁶Hans Windisch, *The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), p. 138.

traditional interpretation of it.

Davies brings interesting corroborating evidence to light supporting the thesis that the breaking of brotherhood relationships is the critical factor in this passage. Although the triadic form . . . anger--judgment; *παρά*--sanhedrin; and fool--hell of fire . . . is rabbinic, and that the significant word *sanhedrin* weights the whole passage toward the context of Jewish legalism, the Jewish sanhedrin codes made no provision for the punishment for angry speech. However, in the Dead Sea Scrolls the following passage, among others, is found which applies to the interpersonal relations amongst that sect community.

The man who slanders his fellow shall be excluded for one year from the Purity of the Many, and he shall be fined; but any one who slanders the Many shall be banished from them to return no more. They shall also banish never to return the man who murmurs against the institution of the Community; but if his murmurings be against his fellow who has not been convicted, he shall be fined for six months.¹⁷

Davies admits that there is no solid evidence that connects the Dead Sea Scrolls excerpt to Mt. 5:22, yet he speculates there may be some possible connection, and the original author of 22b and c could have been a sectarian.¹⁸

This excerpt reinforces a possible interpretation of Jesus' remarks that anger disrupts communal relationships and whoever expresses this disruptive anger is guilty of denying his fellowman

¹⁷Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 238.

the right to live. What is at stake here is not a condemnation of anger per se, but a positive statement about the importance of the integrity of a community of relationships. The distortion of this integrity threatens the lives of those who depend on that community of relationships for meaning. Moreover, this conclusion is different from that of Kleinknecht and Dibelius who assume the point to be a condemnation of covert human anger because it is a criminal urge¹⁹ which leads to homicide.²⁰ Nor was the major thrust of the text a condemnation of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, pointing out the discrepancy between what they taught and what they did.²¹ The community interpretation of the sixth commandment, which Jesus first used as a polemic, claiming it was the true meaning of the Torah, became solidified itself into a "rule of righteousness."²²

Verses 23f. and 25f. contain two illustrative examples from the early church regarding Jesus' imperative about anger. They are later stages, one taken from cultic practice of the early church, and the other was taken from a common sense legal situation.²³

D. HUMAN ANGER IN THE EPISTLES

I will discuss briefly three passages in which anger is listed

¹⁹Martin Dibelius, *The Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 67.

²⁰Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*

²¹Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²²Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²³Betz, *op. cit.*

along with other vices that are evaluated as incompatible with life in the Christian community. Very little scholarly work has been done regarding these passages. Of the three, II Cor. 12:20 is the only one indisputably written by Paul. It is a passage written to a specific community which expresses Paul's fear of the problems he might find were he to visit Corinth. It includes a list of eight social vices: discord (ἔρις), envy (ζῆλος), anger (θυμός), self-ambition (ἐριθεΐα), slander (καταλαλιά), gossip and tale-telling (ψιθυρισμός), conceit (φυσιώσεις), and unruliness (ἀκαταστασία).²⁴ While the list was probably Stoic in origin, Paul used it not in the Hellenistic sense of personal vices, i.e., anger would ruin an individual's mind or soul, but with the realization that expressions of these vices destroy a community of human relations.²⁵ His concern was promoting harmony and unity in the church at Corinth.

A list of similar vices appears in Col. 3:8. Although Pauline authenticity of Colossians is questionable,²⁶ the concern for community relationship here parallels that in II Cor. 12:20. Here anger (ὀργή) and wrath (θυμόν) appear together, along with malice (κακίαν), slander (βλασφημίαν), and foul talk (αἰσχρολογίαν), all chiefly sins of the tongue.²⁷ Again ὀργή, a settled and calculated anger, is distinguished

²⁴Victor Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 84.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁷Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 79.

from the momentary outburst of θυμός. Both, according to the author, disrupt community life by provoking other people into anger and wrath, thereby distorting and breaking the interpersonal relationships involved.

The passage in Eph. 4:31 is definitely deutero-Pauline, and it is written as if no particular local church were the object of concern. Rather it speaks generally of the Christian church universal, the total body of Christ. The author, who was very familiar with the Pauline corpus, listed six social vices, again chiefly sins of the tongue: bitterness (πικρία) and wrath (θυμός) and anger ὀργή and clamor (κραυγή) and slander and malice. (The same distinction applies here to ὀργή and θυμός, see above.) These vices are contrasted to the three virtues of kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness. The elimination of the vices and the promotion of the virtues seems again to be for the enhancement of social relationships in the Christian community.

Ephesians 4:26 precedes the former passage by five verses, providing one of the unique statements about human anger in the New Testament. "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."

This whole passage originated with Psalm 4:5, which the R.S.V. translates "Be angry, but sin not"; etc. This is a LXX rendering of the text. This same rendering was adopted by the author of Ephesians who did not know Hebrew or the meaning of the text in its original language. The Targum interprets the same text as "Tremble (before

God) and you will not fall into sin."²⁸ Considering the text as it appears in the New Testament, Kleinknecht does not put emphasis on the imperative (ὀργίζεσθε) which would render the following interpretation: "Be angry so far as I am concerned, but do not sin." He interprets the text much the same as the LXX: "If you must be angry, beware lest you sin."²⁹ This passage sounds like a moderate concession to the fact of human anger, even though it may have developed out of a questionable interpretation of the original Psalms. Negative evaluation of anger is implied in that anger might lead to sin.

"Do not let the sun go down on your anger" is a Pythagorean saying which the author of Ephesians inserted to interpret the Psalms passage.³⁰ The Pythagorean segment (vs 26b) implies that unless anger is released it leads to sin; therefore, it should be dealt with promptly, or at least by the end of the day.³¹ However, to this remark is attached the additional mandate, "And give no opportunity to the devil." Given the hints of a dualism between light and darkness found in Ephesians,³² this comment about the devil says less about anger leading to sin if neglected too long, and more about the power

²⁸Francis W. Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians: Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), X, 699f.

²⁹Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 79.

³⁰Beare, *op. cit.*

³¹Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*

³²G. Johnston, "Ephesians," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 108ff.

of the devil after dark. That is, to the Greek mind nighttime was the realm of evil spirits, and in the darkness evil spirits would surely take advantage of anger, thereby creating sin.

In this passage the Greek words for anger change, but this change is not reflected in the English translation. ὀργίζεσθε is the imperative, "be angry," which, with the root ὀργ, implies more deliberation than the spontaneity of θυμός. Nevertheless, in verse 27a, παροργισμός also translates anger, but definitely implies a "wrathful indignation which threatens to become a lasting bitterness."³³ Kleinknecht thinks this change is intentional, which in this context either attributes to the evil forces of darkness the power to antagonize and intensify anger to bitterness, or it reveals a sophisticated psychological insight about the results of repressed and unresolved anger. The fact is, the author used two distinct words that express a change in the understanding of the anger being considered. The implication is that anger should be dealt with somehow, although the author does not offer any definite suggestions in this passage. However, five verses later, showing a concern for harmony in the community of faith, it is suggested that anger be put away along with the other social vices.

James 1:19-20 also deals with the communal implications of human anger. "Know this my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not

³³Kleinknecht, *op. cit.*, IV, 74.

work the righteousness of God." ὀργή is used in both verses to express a purposive and deliberative form of anger. In this passage also there are implications that the author was concerned for the integrity of the Christian community. Furthermore, he was concerned that firm faith reflected itself in appropriate performance.³⁴ Faith is more than assent to orthodoxy; therefore, the author has been realistic about the human capacity, granting some concession to the existence of human anger. The warning to "be slow to anger" sounds Greek in that it advocates moderation. While the author realistically conceded the existence of anger, vs. 20 provides no justification for anger by cautioning that "it does not work the righteousness of God." This qualification can be seen only as a negative evaluation of anger. The last two texts have come closest to acknowledging explicitly and realistically the existence of human anger, but both acknowledgments are quickly qualified and given a negative evaluation.

E. SUMMARY OF THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS

The biblical understanding of wrath or anger emerges from a tradition dominated by the concept Wrath of God. This is essentially a symbol that conveys a theological understanding of God; it does not describe and account for God's emotions. More important, the theological understanding of God's wrath became increasingly understood in terms of a covenant relationship with a chosen people. Early Old

³⁴A. E. Barnett, "Letter of James," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, *op. cit.*, II, 794f.

Testament descriptions of God did contain strains of anthropomorphism, but by the writing of the New Testament, these anthropomorphic elements were largely refined out of the New Testament portrayal of the wrath of God. This was especially true in the Pauline understanding of the wrath of God. But the Synoptics with their non-Pauline concern for the life and ministry of Jesus revealed that Jesus expressed anger.

The very early witnesses to Jesus probably maintained well the tension inherent in the incarnational interpretation of what Jesus was--both human and divine. Jesus' anger then at once revealed his own humanity and at the same time the wrath of God. But as the church encountered Hellenism and the Stoic value system, the human side of Jesus' anger became modified to conform to a wrath of God understanding, more closely consistent to a Greek understanding of a rational, stable, and transcendent concept of divinity.

Nevertheless, there is preserved in the New Testament through the expressions of Jesus' anger and the anger in the parables, a connecting element that bridges the "transcendence gap" between the wrath of God and man's understanding of the Kingdom of God. Hence, the human experience of the divine is not necessarily discontinuous with everyday experience.

The New Testament does give explicit concern for human anger in that human anger threatens to disrupt or distort community relationships. Therefore, human anger in these passages, e.g., the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistles, is condemned.

I conclude that the New Testament speaks of human anger in

two ways: explicitly and implicitly. It speaks "explicitly" about anger in the sense of the previous paragraph, in talking *about* anger and its effect on community integrity. When it speaks explicitly, human anger receives a negative evaluation.

The New Testament speaks "implicitly" of anger when it acknowledges anger as a component of human existence by referring to it in the life of Jesus or in the parables. In this sense the New Testament uses anger to communicate the nature of the Kingdom, and anger does not receive the negative evaluation it does otherwise.

CHAPTER IV

ANGER IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY

Contemporary views of anger vary widely. The intent of this chapter is to trace the development of the concept of anger primarily from the perspective of behavioral psychology. I am not knowingly neglecting the thinking of the psychoanalysts and others who view anger and aggression as instinctual, but I find the thinking that comes out of psychological studies of perception, learning, and situational stimuli provides a more inclusive approach to the subject of human anger. Konrad Lorenz in *On Aggression*¹ wrote compellingly on behalf of an instinctual understanding of aggression and anger. According to the critical reaction from the scientific community, Lorenz's manner of expressing his theories was more compelling than the theories themselves. Rather than reviewing *On Aggression* and the responses to it, I recommend the reader to the book *Man and Aggression*,² edited by M. F. Ashley Montagu. All the contributors severely criticize Lorenz, his methods, and his conclusions.

After a review of the historical development of the theoretical conceptions of anger, I will formulate a working definition for anger, and draw conclusions based on the contemporary thinking which I have covered.

¹Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Bantam, 1970).

²M. F. Ashley Montagu (ed.), *Man and Aggression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

The extreme slant toward a behaviorist approach to psychology which followed a rather rigid stimulus-response model for human behavior has left a paucity of scholarly work done on the subject of anger.³ Under the stimulus-response model, anger was considered non-existent in the sense that it was non-empirical and, therefore, did not fit into theories that considered as legitimate subject matter, only overt, definable, and measurable behavior. Twentieth century behaviorists have neglected and minimized emotions in much the same manner as they have neglected and minimized instincts as viable answers to the questions of human behavior. Consequently, anger has received only secondary investigation as an appendage or antecedent in studies of the more overt behavior of human aggression. (Note the titles in the bibliography that relate primarily to aggression and which are, for the most part, the only sources of material on anger.)

A. THE FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION HYPOTHESIS

This pattern of anger being secondarily related to aggression started in 1939 with the famous study called *Frustration and Aggression* by the Yale psychologists Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears.⁴ This book is notable for our purposes because it established the

³Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 32; O. Hobart Mowrer, *Learning Theory and Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1961), p. 403.

⁴John Dollard, et.al., *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

behaviorist approach to aggressive behavior in human beings, and thoroughly excluded anger from that approach. It is this precedent with which psychologists who wish to include any concept of emotions in their theorizing must contend.

The Yale group hypothesized that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposed the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression."⁵ "The goal-response to which is the injury of the person toward whom it is directed--is called *aggression*."⁶ Aggression does not always manifest itself in overt physical behavior. It can be verbal, fantasy, or a well thought-out plan of revenge. Further elaboration by Dollard and his colleagues included variables such as the instigation of frustration, the degree of frustration, and the number of frustrated responses. Increases in all of these factors would in turn increase the likelihood of aggression. They further considered that the amount of anticipated punishment would proportionally inhibit aggression.⁷

On the aggression side of the hypothesis, they talked about degrees of aggressive response: direct and indirect, strong and weak, displaced or sublimated, all depending on the degree of frustration, the agent perceived to be the frustrator, and the degree of anticipated punishment.⁸

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 27ff.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 39ff.

This first effort at viewing aggression sprang from a mixture adopted from the hydraulic thinking of the psychoanalytical school which assumes that energy builds up under pressure until it finally bursts through its restraints. Frustration increases that pressure and aggression represents the breakthrough of restraints. These hydraulic notions came from interpretations of clinical experiences that follow the Freudian tradition. Dollard *et al.*, however used a quasi-experimental methodology from the behaviorist school to establish and maintain their thesis. This approach eliminates the consideration of anger as an intervening variable between the stimulus of frustration and the response of aggression.⁹

In 1941 Neal E. Miller, one of the authors of the original frustration-aggression hypothesis, wrote an article in response to the criticism that frustration does not lead only to aggression, and that the original hypothesis made no distinction between actual aggression and the instigation toward aggression. Miller's article modified the original theory to say that frustration leads to a number of different types of response (e.g., regression, withdrawal, etc.), only one of which is the instigation of some form of aggression.¹⁰ Miller did not call this instigation to aggression anger, nor did he give it a status independent of frustration. However, the article did provide for additional responses to frustration besides aggression,

⁹Mowrer, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

¹⁰Neal E. Miller, "The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis," *Psychological Review*, XLVIII (1941), 337f.

and introduced by implication a new state or condition which fell somewhere between the stimulus of frustration and the actual, overt response, aggression, or whatever response followed the frustration.

B. ANGER--AN INTERVENING VARIABLE

I. S. Brown and I. E. Farber wrote a "break-through" article in 1951 titled, "Emotions Conceptualized as Intervening Variables--with Suggestions toward a Theory of Frustration."¹¹ They discussed why emotions had been avoided or left out of scientific theory (the same reasons which have already been reviewed--see p. 69), then went on to suggest that emotions must be considered as inferential facts, not empirical facts.¹² Inferential facts cannot be directly verified with empirical data, but are verified to the extent they lead to more thorough and inclusive understandings of other empirical events. Just as gravity is an inferential fact which cannot be measured directly, nevertheless, in physics it accounts for the phenomenon of falling objects. In the same manner emotions in psychological theories account for certain human behavior patterns. Inferential facts (or theoretical constructs) have their value in helping to predict events or behavior. Brown and Farber went on to say that theories of emotions should connect external environmental events with the behavior of the organism. These external events would include past conditioning,

¹¹J. S. Brown and I. E. Farber, "Emotions Conceptualized as Intervening Variables," *Psychological Bulletin*, XLVIII (1951), 465-495.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 466.

present cues, and future goals. The inference of different emotions must be supported by empirical evidences that point directly to distinct emotions. All intuitive concepts of emotion must be rejected, and a concept of emotion should not be used to explain phenomenon that other constructs in a theory adequately explain.¹³

The authors change radically the definition of frustration, making it a condition or state of the organism caused by the conflict of two competing excitatory tendencies, or the presence of an excitatory tendency opposed by an inhibitory tendency.¹⁴ Definitionally this moves the emphasis from an outside frustrating agent or event to an inside state of the organism. Following this approach, Brown and Farber equated frustration with anger or annoyance, making the frustration, or anger, or annoyance the intervening variable between antecedent conditions in the environment and the behavioral responses to those conditions. Their theory tries to explain *how* behavior is molded, not exactly *what* behavior results. Graphically portrayed, the concept of an intervening variable (i.e., emotions) looks like this: S (stimulus or antecedent conditions) ---> E (emotions) ---> R (behavior response). This was a change from the earlier S-R model which left no room for "intervening variables." Brown and Farber tried to connect external and antecedent conditions in the environment with behavior responses by way of internal, inferred processes which they labeled emotions.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 469-71.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 480f.

C. SITUATION CUES FOR ANGER

J. McV. Hunt in 1958 wrote an article concerning the situational cues for the emotions of anger, fear, and disappointment.¹⁵ He included a list of criteria for identifying specific emotions. 1) Overt responses or behavioral expression, 2) organic, neural, and visceral changes or indicators, 3) arousing situation, 4) past emotional experiences, and 5) personal motivational factors *all* need to be considered when determining what emotions are functioning in a given situation.¹⁶ He and O. Hobart Mowrer maintain a situational or operational definition of anger, pointing out that it is extremely difficult to determine which emotion is functioning if only one or two of these five factors are known. They emphasize factor number three, the arousing situation that precipitates the frustration state of the organism. For Hunt, frustration is behind all three of the emotions: anger, fear, and disappointment. The salient factor in an anger-producing cue situation involves focal attention being given to the frustrating object, whereas fear was elicited more consistently when a frustration of a goal was anticipated in the future. Disappointment occurred in these experiments when the frustration was a past one and the negative consequences were already irreparable.¹⁷ Mowrer says that when expected reinforcement of behavior does not occur, a frustration response is initially

¹⁵J. McV. Hunt, Louise W. Marie, and Eva E. S. Reis, "Situational Cues Distinguishing Anger, Fear, and Sorrow," *American Journal of Psychology*, LXXI (1958), 136-151.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 136f.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

conditioned. Again for Mowrer, frustration is an internal state of the organism which equals anger, not an external event or situation. However, frustration or anger may become an independent emotional status associated with situations which would not normally elicit frustrations or anger.¹⁸ That is, according to Mowrer, a person might be conditioned to respond angrily in a "non-frustrating" situation. This seems to be a function of attitudinal patterns which will be covered later under Buss's definition of hostility (see p. 91).

Mowrer argues further that once anger is granted a status somewhat independent of merely a response to frustration, that it too becomes a motivational force which does not necessarily result in aggression.¹⁹ In 1941 Miller, without using the concept anger, said that aggression was not the only possible response to frustration. Twenty years hence, Mowrer cuts the ties of a necessary causal relationship between the emotion anger and consequence of aggressive behavior. Anger too can have other behavioral consequences.

Hunt and Mowrer seemed to be the prime recognizers of the fact that the emotion anger, although not a construct completely free of environmental determinants or behavioral consequences, is not necessarily tied to "frustrating situations" on the stimulus end of the model, nor is it necessarily tied to aggressive behavior on the response end of the model. The implication of the severing of anger

¹⁸Mowrer, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

from the traditional moorings of frustration and aggression will be explored more thoroughly later.

D. BERKOWITZ AND THE INSTIGATION TO AGGRESSION

Now, I want to consider the concepts of Leonard Berkowitz, one of the prominent contemporary theoreticians of aggression. In his book, *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis*, Berkowitz accepts the basic outline of the 1939 frustration-aggression hypothesis by Dollard, *et al.* That is, aggression is primarily related to frustrations, frustrations being defined for him in the original sense as interference or blocking of goal-oriented activity (not the reaction of the organism to the blocking as Mowrer, Brown and Farber have defined frustration). Aggression means behavior which is aimed at the injury of some object. For Berkowitz, aggression is synonymous with hostility.

Despite his general acceptance of the 1939 work, Berkowitz maintained two major criticisms of the frustration-aggression hypothesis as it had been modified by Miller. He first criticizes the hypothesis for neglecting the intervening emotional variable of anger, but this is nothing new.²⁰ Berkowitz defines anger as a motivational construct that heightens the likelihood of aggressive behavior. He calls it the "instigation to aggression." Please note that Berkowitz once again defines anger in terms of an antecedent to aggression, a

²⁰Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 32.

predisposition to aggression. Although he later acknowledges that aggression is not the only consequence of anger, he builds his primary definition of anger in terms of aggression. He theorizes that there is a one-to-one relationship between the intensity of anger and the strength of the subsequent aggressive behavior, if it occurs. Berkowitz, similar to Hunt, points out, however, that aggression will not occur unless there are appropriate aggression-releasing cues present. In fact, Berkowitz considers the function of these aggression-releasing cues as the single most significant variable in his theory of aggression.²¹

So anger is the result of frustration; it is a predisposition to aggressive behavior, which is in turn dependent upon releasing cues. The strength of the resultant aggression depends on how closely the releasing cue is perceived as associated with the instigator of the frustration. The closer the association, the more intense the aggressive response.²² Inhibiting factors, however, may diminish an aggressive response, even if there exists an instigation to aggression and the appropriate releasing cues. Individuals, through the process of socialization, learn these inhibitory patterns of response.²³

The second major criticism Berkotwitz made of the frustration-aggression hypothesis was that the individual's response to a frustration depends as well on his interpretation of the situation.²⁴

²¹ *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34f.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Interpretation seems to be another inferential fact that indirectly accounts for variations in human behavior, much like anger itself. They are both internal, non-empirical constructs. Berkowitz used studies by W. Janis (1951) of emotional stress under World War II bombing conditions to point out that fear is also a consistent response to frustration, but the variation of response between fear and anger depended on the victims' interpretation of the total situation. When the victims of the bombing interpreted their situation as more vulnerable to damage or destruction by the frustrating agent, i.e., the enemy who was dropping bombs, and less powerful in relationship to those forces, then the victims' fear increased relative to a decreasing anger. The more the victims interpreted they had some kind of power over the bombing forces, the more their anger increased relative to a diminishing fear.²⁵ An additional finding of the Janis study was that, in time, fear also acts as a further frustrating agent, which in turn increases anger. This finding seems to cloud the distinction between the stress emotions, and the theoretical connection between the stimulus situation and the inferred emotional responses. Nevertheless, this study cited by Berkowitz seems to corroborate in a general way Hunt's findings that the individual's interpretation of the total frustrating situation determines his emotional reaction to it. These patterns of interpretation can become habitual, and an individual's behavioral response to frustration in this way can be conditioned

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 43f.

by an habitual interpretation of frustration. According to Berkowitz, if one interprets himself as powerless and vulnerable, he is inclined to respond fearfully, i.e., by withdrawal or guilt. If on the other hand one habitually interprets his situation as one of power to control or hurt his frustrator, then his reaction tends to be angry.

Moreover, Berkowitz emphasizes the role that conditioning and learning play in effecting an individual's interpretation of a potentially frustrating situation. An individual can learn to determine which goal-directed behaviors are being blocked. He can also learn to sort out which of many possible response tendencies might be greater than an aggressive response tendency, and learning can effect the exact nature and intensity of the behavioral responses, whatever they may be.²⁶

Like Dollard, *et al.*, Berkowitz contends that the strength of the goal-directed behavior which has been interrupted, and the degree of interruption, are both variables which when increased tend to increase the instigation to aggression. Contrariwise, the weaker the behavior drive and the less thoroughly it is interrupted, the weaker in turn will be the instigation to aggression or anger.²⁷ Berkowitz points out that anticipated frustrations produce less anger than unanticipated ones, and arbitrary frustrations produce more anger than either anticipated or "reasonable" frustration, i.e., explainable

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 51-58.

frustrations.²⁸

The anger aroused by a particular incident of thwarting will dissipate over time. But anger which results from repeated thwarting can build up, increasing the instigation to aggression, as in a hydraulic model of increasing internal pressure.

Instrumental aggression is that aggression which has nothing to do with anger in the sense of doing injury, but it is hostile, aggressive behavior which is aimed at the attainment of some extrinsic goal.²⁹ Berkowitz refers to instrumental aggression as learned aggression, and illustrates it with military behavior in war where there is no necessary anger due to frustration of a personal goal-oriented behavior. Since Berkowitz's idea of instrumental aggression has nothing to do with anger, it will not be discussed here. It is significant, however, that in this case aggression is considered a learned response independent of anger, and is also seen as being independent of frustration.

E. BUSS: PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF ANGER

Arnold Buss published *The Psychology of Aggression* in 1961,³⁰ one year prior to Berkowitz's major work on aggression. Buss offers a theory of anger and aggression that more clearly differentiates the

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁰Arnold H. Buss, *The Psychology of Aggression* (New York: Wiley, 1961).

issues than does Berkowitz, although there are major points of agreement between the two positions.

Buss defines aggression as a response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism; aggression is synonymous with attack. But in this understanding of aggression there is no notion of intent to hurt or to destroy³¹ as Berkowitz defines aggression (see p. 76). Buss considers "intent" as a private category, not explicitly evident in the act of aggression. He further critiques the frustration-aggression hypothesis for attributing all aggression to frustration. Although the 1939 formulation does not use the category anger, the hypothesis lends itself to later interpretations that included anger. Anger was subsequently defined as a frustration state in the organism (Brown and Farber), and then with Berkowitz anger is the emotional result of a frustrating event or agent. Buss's point is that aggression can be accounted for by explanations other than anger and frustration. Briefly, since our primary concern is not aggression, but anger, Buss points to instrumental aggression which is acted out for the extrinsic rewards, e.g., money, war, etc. This is a notion mentioned but not adequately emphasized by Berkowitz in his critique of the frustration-aggression hypothesis which does claim all aggression is preceded by some form of frustration. Further, Buss considers direct attack as the most potent antecedent of aggression, and this category was implicitly neglected by all the frustration-aggression

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 1f.

people heretofore. Berkowitz and others have tried to include attack as an antecedent to aggression by use of a broad definition of frustration, i.e., an attack experience is a frustrating experience. Such a definition could be rationally defensible, but it is so very broad that it adds little clarification to the subject. Attack can be either verbal or physical, and the tendency to respond with counter aggression increases as the intensity of the attack increases.³² With a mild attack there is only a mild tendency to fight back. Buss also includes annoyers or irritants as antecedents to anger or aggression. These are often simple sensory stimuli such as obnoxious noise or light, or a pungent smell. Annoyers do not frustrate in the sense of blocking activities, and since they are not "focused" on a particular group or person, they are not attacking stimuli. Also, annoyers may only be nuisances in particular situations, but otherwise neutral or unnoticed.³³ Both annoyers and attack produce anger, the intervening variable to which we now turn our attention.

One of the unique and helpful aspects of Buss's approach is that he points to the independent status of anger by enumerating the physiological components of an anger response. W. B. Cannon first explored the physiological aspects of anger in his book titled *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear, and Rage*, published in 1929. The anger response has facial, skeletal and autonomic components.³⁴ While the

³²*Ibid.*, p. 29.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 29f.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 9.

socialization process modifies the behavioral expressions of anger (facial scowls and threatening skeletal positions), socialization has no effect at all on the autonomic physiological factors. For this reason, Buss contends that children whose anger responses have not been fully socialized or extinguished make the best subjects with whom to investigate anger.³⁵

Diffuseness characterizes the emotion anger. Widespread changes in pulse rate, blood pressure, respiration and blood sugar occur in a person who is angry. A more precise physiology of anger will be explored later (see p. 94). These reactions are all autonomic. A wide variety of postural responses occur also, the most extreme of which is a tantrum. Even though the postural responses are not autonomic, sometimes they will "show through" in a person who has not been completely "socialized."

The whole organism is *energized* when angry. Anger typically intensifies aggression or the attacking response, or when the response is non-aggressive in nature, anger tends to confuse and disorganize it. This is experienced as a difficulty concentrating when angry.

Lastly, the organism when angered is physiologically in a *state of tension* which although the body is aware of the difference between this state of tension and a state of rest, verbally describing the tension state in detail is difficult . . . stirred up, tense, tight, excited, etc., are the common reports.³⁶

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 10f.

Since instrumental aggression can occur without anger, anger is not *the* drive to aggression (other "drives" also lead to aggression). Buss concludes it is not fruitful to regard anger as a drive state. He deals with anger as an emotional response which raises the tension level and energizes aggression. This approach emphasizes the stimulus operations and the internal aspects of anger.

In other than instrumental aggression, anger functions as an intervening variable in response to noxious stimuli--attack or annoyance, and to some frustrations. Buss contends that there are varieties of frustration, and that it is inadequate to include all these phenomenon under one label without making some distinctions. All types of frustration do not necessarily elicit anger or lead to aggression. He distinguishes different frustrations according to what kind of behavior is interrupted. A person's activity of doing something (an instrumental response) might be interrupted by 1) barriers (e.g., no cooperation, traffic jams, etc.), 2) failure (e.g., insufficient time or talent to complete task, etc.) or, 3) conflict (e.g., competition with another person for the same goal, avoidance responses to the goal-task, etc.). All these are frustrations that interfere with instrumental responses in a task activity.

Secondly, frustration can occur when an expected reward is not presented at the completion of a task or other expectations are not met when a task is completed.

Thirdly, frustration will occur when the expected reward is presented but cannot be appropriately used. (A child receiving a toy,

but his parents restrict his playing with it.) This Buss labels "prevention from making the appropriate consumatory response."³⁷

All the above are varieties of frustrating situations, but not all elicit anger or aggression. Buss elaborates under what circumstances frustrations do lead to anger and aggression. Experiments reporting the reactions to frustration seem to conclude that the stronger the response being blocked, the more likely a person is to become angry.³⁸ Buss discounts that a person's anger increases as a block occurs closer to the termination of a task or behavior response.³⁹ Buss did conclude, in agreement with Berkowitz, that arbitrary frustrations tend to elicit more anger than do non-arbitrary frustrations.⁴⁰ Buss concludes that probably the most important point in respect to laboratory experiments involving anger and aggression is one that makes only common sense: there are very real moral, physical, and emotional problems in eliciting full-fledged anger and aggression responses in a laboratory situation. It is hardly safe or wise to attack somebody or to frustrate a person extensively to the point of eliciting direct aggression. The indirect methods of measuring anger and aggression in the laboratory rely chiefly on inference (e.g., pressure used to push buttons or the number of electrical shocks administered being equal to some quantitative degree of anger or aggression), and field experiments on anger and aggression leave the

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 23.

experimenter vulnerable to either uncontrollable variables or personal injury. Hence the paucity of reliable experimental data on anger and aggression.⁴¹ This same point will reoccur in the discussion of the physiological components of anger.

The bodily changes which occur with the onset of anger have been studied primarily in animals. Cannon (1929) first considered the human bodily preparations for "fight or flight" under one rubric, *emotion*, and he believed the physiological components for fear and anger were the same. The twin responses to danger were preparations for violent activity: either to run long enough to outdistance a pursuer, or to attack with a force strong enough to overcome the source of danger. Cannon listed six physiological reactions that occur with anger or rage. These reactions were ostensibly set in motion by discharges of the sympathetic nervous system.

1. Slowing or stopping of processes in the digestive tract.
2. Shift of blood from abdominal organs to skeletal muscles.
3. More vigorous contraction of the heart.
4. Deeper respiration.
5. Dilation of the bronchioles.
6. Mobilization of sugar in the circulation.⁴²

More recent research has established that physiological changes in both fear and anger are precipitated by the secretions of adrenaline from the adrenal medulla, and secretions of noradrenaline, which, there is evidence to believe, is a precursor in the line of chemical transformations that end in adrenaline.⁴³ Adrenaline has the following

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

widespread autonomic reactions upon normal subjects:

1. Striking increase in cardiac output.
2. Significant rise in systolic blood pressure.
3. Insignificant rise in diastolic blood pressure.
4. Slight rise in mean arterial pressure.
5. Sharp drop in peripheral blood vessel resistance.
6. Moderate rise in pulse rate.

Subjects responded to noradrenaline somewhat differently:

1. No change or moderate increase in cardiac output.
2. Significant rise in systolic blood pressure.
3. Significant rise in diastolic blood pressure.
4. Significant rise in mean arterial pressure.
5. Striking increase in peripheral blood vessel resistance.
6. Significant increase in pulse rate.⁴⁴

There are two major differences in the function of adrenaline and noradrenaline. Adrenaline elevates cardiac output and allows blood to reach skeletal muscles by reducing peripheral resistance. Noradrenaline, on the other hand, has little or no effect on cardiac output and it cuts off blood to the skeletal muscles by increasing peripheral resistance. Adrenaline is the stimulant in emergency situations.

An experiment conducted by Albert Ax and written up in 1953⁴⁵ resulted in some distinctions between the physiological reactions to fear and the reactions to anger. Although this paper is not concerned with the details of experimental procedure, it is interesting to realize the methods by which these emotions are induced in subjects, and to appreciate the limitations of doing experimental work in this

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵Albert F. Ax, "The Physiological Differentiation of Fear and Anger in Humans," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, XV (1953), 433-442.

area. The following is an account of the experimental procedure used by Ax to elicit anger responses. One of two experimenters acted as a polygraph operator.

He was described to the subject as not the regular operator but one who has been fired for incompetence and arrogance, but due to the sickness of the regular operator he had to be employed for that day. Thus he was labeled as a suitable target for hostility by the subject. At the beginning of the anger stimulus, the operator entered the room stating that he must check the wiring because some calibration might be off. The experimenter objected but agreed to go into the other room and operate the polygraph. The operator shut off the music, criticized the nurse, and told the subject sarcastically that it would have helped if he had been on time. He checked the electrodes, roughly adjusted the subject, and criticized him for moving, non-cooperation and other behavior. After five minutes of abuse, the operator left and the experimenter returned, apologizing for this rude behavior.⁴⁶

From this experiment and a subsequent procedure which created a situation that threatened the subject with a high voltage shock, Ax made some physiological distinctions between fear and anger. An anger reaction resembles the combined reaction of both adrenaline and noradrenaline, whereas fear precipitates an adrenaline reaction exclusively.⁴⁷ Joseph Schachter's article, "Pain, Fear, and Anger in Hypertensives and Normotensives: A Psychophysical Study," also confirmed the results of Ax.⁴⁸ Although the two experiments by Ax and Schachter tend to establish clear-cut distinctions between fear and anger reactions, an experiment by J. Tracktir in 1954 in which he

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 435.

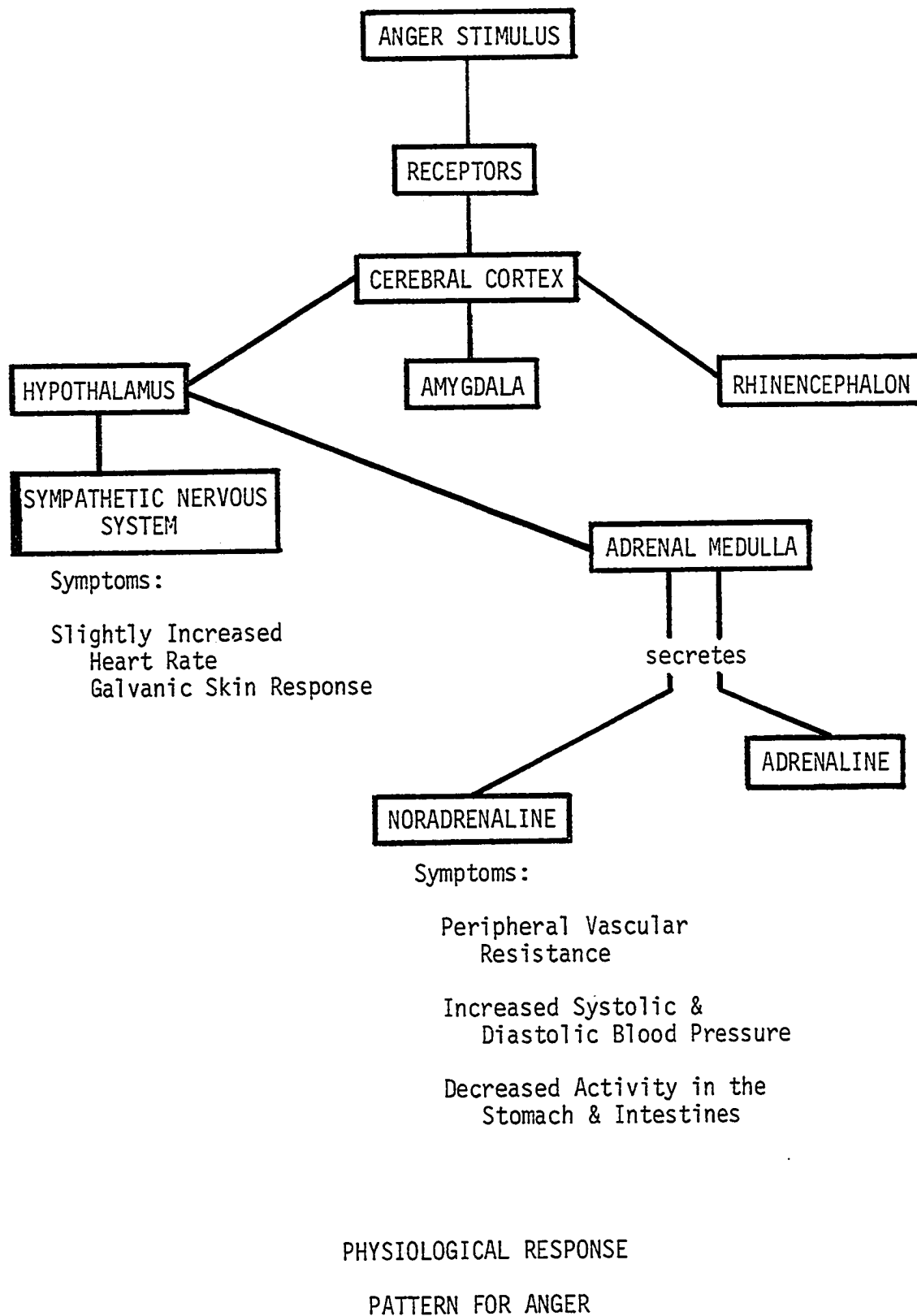
⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 441.

⁴⁸Joseph Schachter, "Pain, Fear, and Anger in Hypertensives and Normotensives," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, XIX (1957), 17-29.

measured the acidity secretion from people under hypnotically induced states of fear and anger disclosed that both emotions had an inhibiting effect on gastric secretion, depending on the general anxiety level of the subject. "High anxious subjects secreted more acid in fear than in anger, whereas the low anxious subjects secreted more acid in anger than in fear."⁴⁹ Evidently, the differences between fear and anger are often minute and very much dependent on other variables. Furthermore, these differences are difficult to measure. Buss speculates that if experimenters were able in a laboratory situation to precipitate and measure a full-fledged anger reaction, the physiological changes may well increasingly resemble a fear reaction. At this time comparisons are made only between superficial anger and the more genuine but less destructive fear reactions, and slight physiological differences continue to manifest themselves.⁵⁰

Along with his other conclusions, Schachter discovered that the neural element of an anger reaction which is mediated in the sympathetic nervous system precedes in the causal chains the chemical activity of noradrenaline and adrenaline circulating in the blood stream.⁵¹ This indicates that anger is an emotion stimulated externally and mediated through the sympathetic nervous system, not a reaction precipitated by body chemistry as some internal instinct theorists believe. The following chart serves to summarize the physiological components of an anger reaction.

⁴⁹Buss, *op. cit.*, p. 99. ⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 101. ⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 100.



F. CATHARSIS AND HOSTILITY

There are two topics or concepts that are closely related to anger which warrant discussion: catharsis and hostility. Catharsis is a concept derived from psychoanalytic thought which Dollard, *et al.*, adopted in their theory. "The occurrence of any act of aggression is assumed to reduce the instigation to aggression."⁵² Berkowitz pointed out that in this hydraulic view the expression of aggression was supposed to reduce the instigation to aggression regardless of its effectiveness in removing the obstacle(s) to the goal-directed activity. People have usually associated "feeling better" with the expression of inhibited aggression.⁵³ However, Berkowitz, in viewing anger as a drive state or an instigation to aggression, concludes that relief from tension in a hydraulic manner does not result from the mere aggressive expression of anger. With Buss, Berkowitz agrees that aggression may not be a cathartic expression of anger, but an habitual behavior response which is independent of frustration and/or anger, and this habitual behavior response reinforces itself (i.e., produces further expressions of aggression) rather than relieving the tension (i.e., reduces the instigation to aggression). Buss calls this habitual behavior response hostility, an enduring attitudinal response involving negative feelings and negative evaluations of people and events. It is neither instrumental nor autonomic, but has to do with

⁵²Dollard, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵³Berkowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

the evaluation of external stimuli entailing a nonverbal "mulling over" process. Hostility can be the residual effects of anger, but it becomes independent of anger and frustration. According to Buss, hostility lacks the physiological components of anger; anger does not necessarily involve hostility, nor does aggression involve hostility. Neither will the expression of aggression relieve or reduce hostility.⁵⁴

Berkowitz concludes that there is no substantial evidence of cathartic lessening in the strength of aggressive tendencies following the performance of hostile acts.⁵⁵ He figures if there is any reduction in the emotion anger, it is the result of removing the frustrating obstacle.

Buss, however, has a different view of anger and catharsis. Since anger is for him an emotional response with physiological components that result in bodily tensions, he views catharsis in a more traditional, but, nevertheless, sophisticated way. He considers that anger is a transient reaction and that the related physiological tensions will dissipate over time, whether or not aggression occurs.⁵⁶ But the presence or absence of anger--the physiological tension state--determines whether catharsis will occur. Catharsis is the reduction of this tension state, and once the tension state subsides, catharsis can no longer occur. Buss does say that when aggression occurs with

⁵⁴Buss, *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff.

⁵⁵Berkowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁵⁶Buss, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

anger present, there is a reduction in tension and the tendency to aggress therefore decreases.⁵⁷ Buss, however, states further that there are no studies which measure the exact effect of aggression on physiological tension.⁵⁸ He does point out that his idea of aggression has various modes of expression including fantasy, play, griping, and other vicarious means, all having a differing cathartic effect. Probably the most active and direct forms of aggression have the most cathartic effects.⁵⁹

G. ANGER: A SIGNAL

The definitions that the researchers and scholars have provided for anger have been in terms of experimental and theoretical conclusions. The definition I wish to use for anger does not neglect the work of psychologists, but sees their conclusions from a more subjective perspective. That is, I see anger as a signal, a symptom, constituted by physiological components which indicates that the angered person is being attacked, annoyed, or some aspect of his goal-directed behavior is being frustrated at one or more levels. Since frustration is a much more subtle and less definable antecedent of anger than direct attack or non-specified annoyances (although attack is a more potent antecedent), I, like the psychologists, will give greater attention to it. While direct attack tends to increase the

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 90.

likelihood of an aggressive response, I would remove from my definition any notion that anger is itself necessarily an antecedent to aggression. While Berkowitz defines anger as the instigation to aggression, and says that "doing injury is the goal response terminating the aggressive response sequence, and it is not until such a response is made that the 'instigation to completion' is satisfied."⁶⁰ I feel that this understanding attributes to the response sequence intent, and contradicts Berkowitz's own theory that the reduction of the instigation to aggression results merely from the overcoming of the frustrating obstacle or agent. By law of parsimony, if the frustration can be overcome by actions short of injury or destruction of the obstacle or agent, then there is no need to attribute to the response sequence the goal of injury and destruction. Further, Berkowitz states that anger alone is not a sufficient stimulus of aggression unless the appropriate cues are present to release aggressive behavior, further minimizing the antecedent relationship anger has to aggression.

A person's exact response to the anger signal is a function of learned behavior which, as Berkowitz has helpfully indicated, depends substantially on how the person interprets the situation of frustration, attack, or annoyance. Buss has pointed to the fact that frustrations can occur at many points in the behavior sequence. Learning enables the person to perceive what goal-directed behavior is being frustrated and at what point in the behavior process. Further, learning can

⁶⁰Berkowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

enable a person to see what specific obstacle or agent is interfering with his goal-directed activity and how immutable those obstacles are. Lastly, learning can enable the person to see and evaluate the variety of responses he can make to the frustration. Learning or conditioning can of course reinforce the frustration-anger-aggression sequence which even contemporary psychology itself has "reinforced" by the literature that interprets anger as a subcategory of aggression, but on the other hand, learning and conditioning can free people from the perception that anger is necessarily tied to the consequences of aggression. Nothing makes aggression the fixed result of anger.⁶¹ I would favor a definition of anger that functioned in terms of external stimuli and situational frustrations (excluding momentarily the notions of attack and annoyance) which demand resolution, rather than a definition that functions in terms of internal build-up of energy that demands release or catharsis and thereby is seen as determinant of human behavior. I would not deny the physiological emphasis Buss gives to his definition of anger, but would, in my scheme, underline again the message quality of physiological tension that points to external frustrations that require resolution, i.e., the removal of frustrations. In practical terms this idea would manifest itself in a person reacting to saying, "I'm angry; I wonder what's frustrating me?", rather than, "I'm angry and I need to blow off steam."

⁶¹Mowrer, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

While cathartic purges--whether physically, verbally, or imaginarily aggressive--may or may not release physiological tensions, only resolution of the frustrating circumstances that precipitated the anger response finally does away with the tension state, the anger signal.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

A. BIBLICAL AGGRESSION, NOT ANGER

Both the Bible and contemporary psychology acknowledge the existence of human anger. That has never really seemed to be the question. More appropriately, the question seems to be how these traditions, separated by nearly 2,000 years, acknowledge, interpret, and evaluate anger. In one respect, both the New Testament writers and contemporary psychologists view anger as problematic because of its seemingly close association with aggression. Anger is condemned in the Sermon on the Mount because it threatened to deny other people of the community the right to live. It is condemned in the Epistles because it threatens to disrupt community life.

Although it is illegitimate to impose contemporary definitions on ancient literature, a contemporary point of view can lend perspective to the earlier work. The New Testament writers, in assuming that anger threatens community integrity and human life, seem to be defining anger in the same way as Berkowitz defines it . . . as the antecedent of aggression. Or, what is being referred to as anger in these biblical situations is in fact aggression, i.e., overt acts, either physical or verbal, that do disrupt human lives and relationships. These situations may or may not have any connection with the emotion anger. The New Testament may have been describing hostility,

i.e., aggressive behavior which is independent of the emotion anger. So, in my opinion, the New Testament, like contemporary psychology, has overly associated the emotion anger, an internal state of physiological tension resulting from frustration, attack, or annoyance, with the overt behavior of aggression. This unnecessarily close association contributes to the New Testament's condemnation of human anger when human anger is spoken of explicitly (see p. 66 for distinction between implicitly and explicitly).

B. THE DEVIL, NOT CATHARSIS

A cathartic understanding of anger could possibly be inferred from the Pythagorean statement in Eph. 4:26, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger; and give no opportunity to the devil." This passage has been interpreted to mean that anger builds up and creates (according to a hydraulic model) the urge to sin. I think this imposes too heavily on the passage a contemporary understanding of anger. (The fact is, the emotional-physiological tension, without further stimulation, subsides whether or not aggression occurs [see p. 92]). The passage may make good practical sense (that anger should be acknowledged and dealt with before it is intensified to bitterness) for the wrong reason (because the devil rules in darkness and may convert the anger to bitterness). Some notion of hostility as a conditioned negative response to external people or events may be implied here, but no cathartic understanding of anger seems implied by the author of Ephesians.

C. IMPLICIT ANGER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When the New Testament dealt "implicitly" with anger, Jesus' anger, or anger in the parables, it did so in a different context. Instead of focusing exclusively on the consequences of anger and over-associating it with aggression, the New Testament writers provided a picture of the total situation which stimulated the anger response. In describing the whole scene, e.g., Jesus angrily expelling the money changers from the temple, the authors of the Synoptics take into account most of the variables present in an emotion-laden situation as mentioned by J. McV. Hunt (see p. 74). We have Jesus' overt response or behavior; we know the arousing situation; we know something of Jesus' personal motivation factors as interpreted by the early church; and by inference from early church perspectives of Jesus, we can guess at some of his emotional factors. This last exercise, however, should be done with caution. The New Testament was written from a theological perspective, not a psychological or physiological one. Therefore, we have no record of the organic, neural, or visceral changes that took place in Jesus' body. The point is that in the situations in which Jesus' anger is mentioned or implied, the reader has the benefit of knowing the contextual factors that precipitated his anger, even though a theological point is the focus, not Jesus' emotional life.

In the parables, all the more provision was made to supply the circumstances which led to the anger of the focal character, the king or the master. While the parables, in order to "happen" properly,

depend on enough detail so that the hearer identifies with the situation. The parables of the Great Supper and the Unmerciful Servant did not necessarily have to mention the fact of anger to make their point. The anger was built in, as it were, by the arrangement of the situation.

Anger in the cases of the parables and the incidents in the ministry of Jesus can be interpreted as signals that indicate the presence of a frustrating situation in which, in the parables for example, the expectations of the master and the king were not reinforced. For the hearer, understanding occurs once he identifies with the expectations of the master or king, then feels the signal of frustration--the anger--when the expectations are not met. This implicit use of anger differs from the explicit condemnation of anger (Sermon and Epistles), both in its evaluation--it is not condemned--and in its provision of a situational context for expression.

A third difference is also evident. Anger as it is portrayed in the life of Jesus and the parables appears not as a dominant force, but a secondary factor contributing to larger themes or values. Rather than being the controlling situational variable, the anger portrayed here helps to shed light on other concerns. While on one hand anger points to a frustration, it on the other hand points to a value system that has been violated or threatened. The emotion anger stands as a signal between a set of expectations that evolve out of a structure of values and a particular incident or occasion when the values of that structure are not being met or fulfilled.

Anger can function in this particular way irregardless of the characters or the context of the stimulating situation. Given the understanding of the psychologies of learning and perception, human beings can learn to interpret anger as a signal that points not only to the frustrating pole of the situation where one can determine which of his behaviors are being frustrated, by what agent or obstacle, to what extent, and how to cope best with the frustration; moreover, the other pole of the situation, the value pole, can be questioned. What are the values that lie behind the expectations which are presently frustrated?

Anger is one dependent variable in a whole context. It is not necessarily an independent cause or dominant factor. With this view much of the threatening and destructive power that comes with a perception of anger as necessarily the antecedent of aggression is itself made impotent. Anger is not an irreversible drive-force that compels humans to aggression, *unless* it has been conditioned to be such a drive-force. With such conditioning, the emotion anger justifies aggressive behavior because the anger is seen as the dominant causal factor which itself functions independently of other antecedent conditions. With the attention then focused on the anger, control is relinquished entirely to the emotion anger, with little or no responsibility being felt by the angered person.

There is possible need for clarification here. Control is not being used here in a moralistic sense of "people should control their anger." On the other hand, people should not be controlled by

their anger, and one helpful perspective that has been suggested is to look at anger as a signal that arises out of a situation that needs to be modified, or expectations that contribute to the frustration which needs modification. The anger does not have to be acted out aggressively.

D. PERFECTIONISM DISRUPTS HUMAN RELATIONS

The Bible's condemnation of anger has been misunderstood. While Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and the writers of the Epistles were primarily concerned about aggressive and divisive behavior that destroyed communities, expressly the communities of early Christian believers, modern readers have interpreted the biblical injunction against anger in a pseudo-psychological manner, reading it as a demand for personalistic perfection that excludes negative human emotions. This continuation of a Hellenistic/Stoic interpretation of the New Testament, which had its initiative in the scriptures themselves (see p. 29), puts more emphasis on the Stoic ideals of moderation of personal behavior and the perfection of the individual than on the community concern for reconciling individuals to one another.

My speculation is that in misunderstanding the biblical message as one demanding individual perfection, Christians have reacted, not by accepting personal anger as part of the human condition, (see Bornkamm, pp. 22 and 23) but they have reacted by denying and suppressing their anger in an attempt to conform to a norm that is more Stoic than it is Christian. Granted, the free and aggressive expression of

anger, the reality of which itself cannot be denied, fragments, separates, and destroys communities and human lives. These expressions of anger do call for caution and control if that's the dominant understanding of how anger is expressed. But on the other hand, denial and suppression of anger has also had its negative consequence in terms of community life and the integrity of human lives.

By denying the emotion of anger humans refuse to acknowledge a part of their own experience which has, by the life of Jesus, been endorsed as an acceptable aspect of human life. Thus, one sacrifices a segment of his humanity on the alter of perfectionism when anger is denied or suppressed.

Secondly, if the signal of anger is not acknowledged or taken seriously, the antecedent and causal frustrations may go unmodified, or the expectations and values behind them continue to function unquestioned. Under these conditions, unresolved anger receives continual stimulation, which creates contingent problems. In this sense the emotional tensions of anger that result from continued frustrations may precipitate an aggressive outburst if no other alternative is perceived. Or a conditioned attitude of hostility may develop which molds a person's perception independent of any frustrating circumstances.

Lastly, the denial of personal anger has its own way of separating communities and denying people the right to live. When people deny or find unacceptable the existence of anger in their own lives, they are likely to find the anger of other persons unacceptable

also. Hence, other people who express anger, not necessarily aggressively, are found unacceptable. This puts a barrier between the perceiver who pridefully denies his own anger, and the perceived whose anger somehow disqualifies him as a legitimate member of the human community. Although the evil of aggressive behavior destroys communities, the more subtle evil, pride, tears with equal vengeance the common bonds of brotherhood. This seems to be what happens when people adopt for themselves the Stoic ideal of perfection, and in turn impose that ideal on other folk in the name of Christianity.

E. CHRISTOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

From an understanding of Jesus develops a Christology, and a Christology provides the structure and values by which to develop a theology of the church and an understanding of human existence. The tensions between a Stoic Christology of individual perfection spill over into contemporary theologies of the church. If Jesus had been perfectly reconciled to both other men and to God, we probably would not have biblical witnesses to his own expressions of anger--both explicit and implied. But the witnesses to these expressions of anger exist, which, with the help of contemporary psychology, could be interpreted as pointing to frustrations in Jesus being reconciled to other men and to God. Jesus himself was in the process of reconciling himself to men and himself to God. I do not think he was in a state of reconciliation. Christians look to his life as being transparent to a process of becoming reconciled, not revelatory of

a state of being reconciled. The Stoic emphasis has tended to make the life of Jesus the example of a static state of reconciliation with God and other men. However, Jesus' anger and his distress on the cross belies this Hellenized perspective. The implications this "process understanding" gives to human existence, especially the experience of anger, have been explored previously in this chapter. That is, becoming reconciled with anger has to do with looking at the precipitating circumstances, the expectations and the frustrations. I have not yet explored the implications this process understanding gives to a theology of the church.

Jesus himself lived becoming reconciled to God and humanity, providing a model for the life of the church. Rather than the church being seen as an institution that encourages and embodies individual perfectionism as some popular notions of the church would advocate, the more appropriate vision of the church which emerges from the New Testament is one that sees the church reconciling human beings with one another, with no expectations of perfection involved. Perfectionism in the area of anger or whatever is just another form of legalism, against which the New Testament message witnessed. The church should not be a component in the social pressure that seeks to deny the signal that human beings are frustrated, but the church has the opportunity by virtue of its calling to seek out these expressions, in hopes of reconciling humanity with God as he is known in Jesus the Christ.

Anger is part of the human experience. It was part of the

life of Jesus. The New Testament was concerned with anger not as an unacceptable emotion, but as a factor that could disrupt community life. Any denial of human experience, including its seemingly negative emotions, also threatens to disrupt the life of the community in that it privatizes the experience and removes individuals from a sense of acceptance in that community. Jesus' life communicated the message of endorsement and acceptance of human experience by God. This message gave birth to the church; the church was born to live out that message.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ax, Albert F. "The Psychological Differentiation of Fear and Anger in Humans," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, XV (1953), 433-442.
- Berkowitz, Leonard. *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.
- _____, and R. W. Buck. "Impulsive Aggression: Reactivity to Aggressive Cues under Emotional Arousal," *Journal of Personality*, XXXV (1967), 415-424.
- _____. (ed.) *Roots of Aggression: A Re-examination of the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis*. New York: Atherton Press, 1969.
- Bornkamm, Gunther. *Early Christian Experience*. Trans. by Paul L. Hammer. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- _____, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held. *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*. Trans. by Percy Scott (New Testament Library). Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.
- Brown, J. S., and I. E. Farber. "Emotions Conceptualized as Intervening Variables with Suggestions toward a Theory of Frustration," *Psychological Bulletin*, XLVIII (1951), 465-495.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. 2nd ed. Trans. by John Marsh. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- _____. *Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. by Kendrick Grobel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-1955. 2 vols.
- Buss, Arnold H. *The Psychology of Aggression*. New York: Wiley, 1961.
- Conzelmann, Hans. *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. by John Bowden. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Cullmann, Oscar. "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" in Krister Stendahl (ed.) *Immortality and Resurrection, Death in the Western World: Two Conflicting Schools of Thought*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
- Davies, W. D. *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. Cambridge: University Press, 1964.
- Dibelius, Martin. *The Sermon on the Mount*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Parables of the Kingdom*. London: Nisbet, 1936.
- Dollard, John, et al. *Frustration and Aggression*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.

- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Trans. by J. A. Baker. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961-1967. 2 vols.
- Funk, Robert. *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1968.
- Greenwood, David. "Moral Obligation in the Sermon on the Mount," *Theological Studies*, XXXI (1970), 301-309.
- Hunt, J. McV., Marie-Louise W. Cole, and Eva E. S. Reis. "Situational Cues Distinguishing Anger, Fear and Sorrow," *American Journal of Psychology*, LXXI (1958), 136-151.
- Interpreter's Bible*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1952. 12 vols.
- Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962. 4 vols.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*. Trans. by S. H. Hooke. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.
- Kleinknecht, Hermann, J. Fichtner, and G. Stählin. "Wrath," in *Bible Key Words*. Ed. by Gerhard Kittel. Trans. by Dorothea M. Barton and P. R. Ackroyd. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. IV:1-148.
- Linnemann, Eta. *Parables of Jesus*. Trans. by John Sturdy. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1966.
- Lorenz, Konrad. *On Aggression*. Trans. by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. New York: Bantam, 1970.
- MacGregor, G. H. C. "The Concept of the Wrath of God in the New Testament," *New Testament Studies*, VII (1961), 101-109.
- McArthur, Harvey K. *Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.
- Miller, N. E. "Experiments on Motivation," *Science*, CXXVI (1957), 1271-1278.
- . "The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis," *Psychological Review*, XLVIII (1941), 337-342.
- Montagu, M. F. Ashley (ed.) *Man and Aggression*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Mowrer, O. Hobart. *Learning Theory and Behavior*. New York: Wiley, 1961.

Robinson, James M. "Jesus' Parables as God Happening," in *Jesus and the Historian*. Ed. by F. Thomas Trotter. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968.

_____. *The Problem of History in Mark*. Naperville: Allenson, 1957.

Schachter, Joseph. "Pain, Fear, and Anger in Hypertensives and Normotensives: A Psychological Study," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, XIX (1957), 17-29.

Stratton, George Malcolm. *Anger: Its Religious and Moral Significance*. New York: Macmillan, 1923.

Via, Dan Otto, Jr. *The Parables--Their Literary and Existential Dimension*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.

Windisch, Hans. *The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount*. Trans. by S. MacLear Gilmour. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951.

224976

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.